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**SOCIAL DISTINCTION AND THE WRITTEN WORD:  
TWO PROVINCIAL CASE STUDIES, WARWICK AND  
DRAGUIGNAN 1780-1820**

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## Synopsis

This is a comparative study of two countries, England and France, two county towns, Warwick and Draguignan, and two families of the trading-manufacturing sort. It argues that, during the period around 1780-1820, the acquisition of a certain form of education, which included an emphasis on fluent reading, writing, and grammar, preferably Latin grammar, became as important as the acquisition of capital. This cultural capital gave its new owners a self-perceived distinction which allowed them to consider themselves and to be considered by others as different.

Even if local, regional, and national differences are taken into account, this comparative study shows that this new perception developed as a transnational phenomenon, a form of culture *sans frontières*, even during the times of enmity and almost uninterrupted wars between Britain and France which characterise this period. This process had begun earlier in the eighteenth century, when the idea of a public opinion and its premise of equal interaction amongst its proponents was 'invented'; but it was facilitated by the French Revolution with its legacy of the notion of equality, and therefore of the importance of communication in forging democracy. The written word was the chosen means to achieve this.

It is argued that this distinctive culture, in the production and consumption of which women played a considerable part, gave voice and a social and political consciousness to those who began to see themselves as the 'middle class'.

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## **Author's Note**

All titles and quotations from the French have been translated by me, unless stated otherwise. Orthography and punctuation of texts of the period under study have not been altered, and the use of [sic] has been kept to a minimum.

## Introduction

In England and in France the paths of the written word multiplied in the eighteenth century, and increasingly so during the period under study. Their dense network transformed the whole structure and mind-set of the activity of reading and writing for a mass of mostly disenfranchised people. It created new social distinctions and powers which have endured to this day. The culture of the written word was an urban phenomenon: towns were the place for what Jürgen Habermas has called ‘the authentic public sphere’ which he defines as “the sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body”, as opposed to the public authority of the State.<sup>1</sup> Towns were the centres *par excellence* of the public sphere, where clubs, inns, coffee houses, markets, shops, and schools were to be found, and into which roads converged. In the crowded urban space, nobody could be isolated from the written word; it infiltrated the lives of most inhabitants, it confronted them in their homes, which were never far from the Market Square or the High Street. This is why the period, roughly spanning the years between 1780-1820, has been chosen because it was a time when trends, which had started much earlier in the eighteenth century, were accelerated; when educational practices changed; when the consumption of culture increased; and when the French Revolution and its aftermath changed social and political attitudes into new or more definite patterns. It is during those years, for instance, that the concept of ‘public opinion’ and ‘culture’ were born.

The object of this work is to show how the possession of a certain form of education and culture provided an identity for those people who had access to it, usually people of the middling sort. I have used the term ‘distinction’ to describe this identity; ‘distinction’ in the sense used by Pierre Bourdieu, meaning an *habitus de*

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<sup>1</sup> Habermas, J., ‘The Public Sphere: an Encyclopaedia article (1964)’, *New German Critique*, 1 (1974), pp. 49-55, with an Introduction by Hohendahl, P., ‘Jürgen Habermas: “The Public sphere”’, pp.45-48.

*classe*, which he defines as the capacity for producing a set of practices and for differentiating and appreciating them.<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu uses the concept for a sociological definition of taste and class in the 1960s and 1970s, but it can be used for the purposes of the social history of the 1780s-1820s as well. In our case it is the ‘linguistic habitus’ or practices that we shall consider: the education in writing and grammar, the reading habits and the patronising of newsrooms, circulating libraries, public libraries, bookshops; in brief the consumption of and commerce with the written word. To illustrate the actual impact of writing in the new public sphere of the modern period, especially in its contribution to the formation of a new class consciousness through the appropriation of the culture of print — which transcended national borders — I have chosen to compare two towns, Warwick in England and Draguignan in France, concentrating on two families in them. Their specificity in place and time has been placed within a *longue durée* of cultural practices, together with the more punctual impact of the French Revolution in both countries, thus using a micro-historical approach, which has been defined by Pat Hudson as a “testing ground for macro-historical theories”, or by Barry Reay as history which “uses the local to explore wider issues”.<sup>3</sup> We hope by this to introduce some coherence to “the fragmentation of reality”, an enterprise which has been described as the main aim of comparative history.<sup>4</sup>

Late eighteenth century Warwick and Draguignan were towns that fostered the establishment of a distinctive class of citizens who derived prominence within their

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<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu, P., *La distinction , critique sociale du jugement*, Paris, 1979, p.112.

<sup>3</sup> Informal paper, given at Warwick University, 14 May, 1998; Reay, B., *Microhistories:demography, society and culture in Rural England, 1800-1930*, Cambridge, 1996, p.260.

<sup>4</sup> Atsma, H., Burguière, A., *Marc Bloch aujourd’hui. Histoire comparée et sciences sociales*. Paris, 1990, p.330, and pp.271-278. NB: All citations translated from the French are by me, unless specified otherwise.

urban setting, by dint of their education and their familiarity with the written word. This is the particular ‘sub-class’ of the middling ranks of those who did not possess status through land, wealth, or family connections and who will be the main protagonists in this study. The towns they lived in were of similar population — upward of 7000 by the end of the period under study — typical eighteenth-century county towns, specialised in offering services to their inhabitants and to their hinterland.<sup>5</sup> Warwick was dominated by its Castle and its administrative oligarchy. Draguignan only by an oligarchy which became broader based at the time of the Revolution. Towns have increasingly been defined by their function and place in the hierarchy of towns within their regions, and Warwick and Draguignan were defined by their administrative function — and still are to a certain extent. But their importance diminished with the increased polarisation from the last decades of the eighteenth century, towards specialist, fast expanding, industrial and commercial towns, such as Birmingham in Warwickshire, or to a lesser degree, Toulon in the Var. The continuing importance of Draguignan and Warwick, in spite of their modest sizes, has relied upon the work of justices of the peace, lawyers, clerks, and solicitors, as well as the activity of the artisans, shopkeepers, and traders who offered the services required by the former. All had to rely on the pen and the written word as tool of their trades.

By the 1790s, however, both towns could be described as undergoing a certain degree of proto-industrialisation and, for Warwick, it was even a small scale industrial revolution, albeit short-lived since it was tied to the wars with France. By comparison, the development of manufacturing in Draguignan was facilitated in the 1790s by the sale of the land of the nobility and the clergy, appropriated as national property, but this development did not fully take off until the 1810s, just when Warwick’s main industrial mini-boom was coming to an end. In both towns, we find that the service industries they specialised in were a constant feature which developed with the increase in their administrative activity. These new services included the

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 1.

leisure industry, catering for the emerging and distinctively urban culture created by, and for, the developing class of those actively involved in the increased economical and administrative functions of their towns. But all was not novelty. The old forms of culture remained, and sometimes were even dominant: that of the Castle and the gentry in Warwick, and that of the religious confraternities in Draguignan. Did writing then open the doors of the public sphere to the two towns' inhabitants, the avenues of consumption and the spread of ideologies? Where was the locus of their particular public opinion? Did it reflect the secularising trend which characterises modern society? — these are questions that we shall consider. Although these two towns cannot but have been affected by the drastic upheavals of Revolution and counter-revolution, they have in fact been remarkable for the continuity of their slow development. There were, however, some episodes of more accelerated growth in our period, as we shall see. Has writing been one of the agents of this continuity, and did it, at the same time, contribute to the emergence of new social divisions based on literacy? It is this very role of writing as a specific social divider which has not received the attention it deserves, and which this study aims to provide.

The period is marked by the relentless struggle of the middling classes towards the acquisition of a better education for their children, via private secondary education in Warwick and Britain in general; while in France the rise of private enterprise in education was accompanied by a parallel creation by the State of an elitist system of *instruction publique* provided in *lycées* and specialised schools. In these establishments the acquisition of a good writing style was of the essence. François Furet & Jacques Ozouf have usefully defined writing as a 'civil' activity, this as opposed to reading, whose historically sacred character gave it universal acceptance;<sup>6</sup> reading was not taught as a skill, but for the memorising and

<sup>6</sup> Furet, F. & Ozouf, J., *Lire et Ecrire, l'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 2 vols, Paris, 1977, p.91. For the apprenticeship of writing see also Chartier, R., Compère, M., Julia, D., *L'éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1976; for England see Vincent, D.,

transmission of the sacred character of its content. They remind us that writing was not user-friendly: "Writing was for a long time a technique, an involved skill requiring an array of tools, a good knack with the hand, and a certain amount of muscular gymnastics."<sup>7</sup> This alone would put writing outside the means of the majority, because of the cost of the array of tools and paper, the necessary table and chair or *escritoire*, and some kind of private space. Writing is a technology, a useful technique to aid business, book-keeping, stock-taking, advertising, land-surveying, etc., all of them fields of activity in expansion in our period.<sup>8</sup> Writing represents the "apprenticeship to utility".<sup>9</sup> The exigencies of what was useful to society meant that the rules of religion were set in a world apart, or were translated into a secularised social catechism, and the agent of such displacement and change was the written word. This secularising influence of writing followed two main routes — that of consumption and that of ideologies — which were both lasting and intertwined products of the period under study, and of what could be described as 'the culture of commerce'. Michel de Certeau has given us a splendid analysis of the formation, in eighteenth-century France, of a social ethic based on the concept of utility, when religious language where the word was a symbol, became a social language where the word was a sign or cipher, a 'civil' language.<sup>10</sup>

The act of writing itself, like consumption, relies on choices; and the written word in the domain of consumption plays the role of both tool and commodity, a means of communication and a saleable good. Education, for instance, then became an often

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*Literacy and Popular Culture England 1750-1914*, Cambridge, 1989; and see also Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Furet, Ozouf, *Lire...*, p.90.

<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting that the development of the first system of writing, in Ancient Mesopotamia around 3000BC, was precisely for these purposes. See Schmandt-Besserat, D., *Before Writing, From Tokens to Cuneiforms*, Austin Texas, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Furet, Ozouf, *Lire...*, p.90.

<sup>10</sup> Certeau, M. de, *L'Ecriture de l'Histoire*, Paris, 1975, pp.153-212.

profitable marketable good. The period saw the decline of the cheap education provided by town corporations, and the proliferation of private schools where useful subjects were taught for practical ends. It was in these schools that the rudiments of capitalist enterprise were learnt. The printing and publishing of “the instruments of linguistic correction”,<sup>11</sup> like textbooks for schools in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was a flourishing industry which kept provincial printers and booksellers alive and often comfortably afloat. Grammars, for instance, were top of the list of school textbooks in England, as a ‘good’, clear language was a prerequisite of the new ordered sociability.<sup>12</sup> When Richelieu created the *Académie Française*, over a century earlier, he knew the importance of language in establishing the ‘one nation’ identity; so later did the Republic — French was to be the liberating tool of the people, the language of the Republic *une et indivisible*.

The history of the written word in the period 1780-1820 both reflects and explains the development of what we generally call public opinion. The existence of a ‘public opinion’ was already a recognised entity in the first decades of the eighteenth century in England, and then in the last in France: the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1775-1800) defines it as the product of reason as expressed by an enlightened consensus.<sup>13</sup> As the conveyor of public opinion and criticism, as mediator between the citizen and the state, the written word has been of fundamental importance. As a vehicle of communication between private individuals, it has created, fixed, and transmitted a new bonding culture for those who had access to it. A defining instance would be the *Cahiers de Doléances* where, for the first time on such a scale, the complaints and wishes of private citizens were allowed to be

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<sup>11</sup> Bourdieu, P., *Ce que parler veut dire*, Paris. 1982, p.51.

<sup>12</sup> For the apprenticeship of reading, and schoolbooks in England, see Michael, I., *The teaching of English from the Sixteenth Century to 1870*, Cambridge. 1987; for France: Furet, Ozouf, *Lire...*; and Chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Baker, K., *Inventing the French Revolution*, Cambridge. 1990, p.193. The entry ‘opinion’ in the *Encyclopédie* of 1751-1780 defines opinion at the individual level only.

expressed and made public by the intermediary of the pen.

There is no agreement among historians today on the question of who formed the eighteenth-century enlightened consensus: the noblesse, the professionals especially the lawyers, the *philosophes* and the salons, or the new capitalist bourgeoisie?<sup>14</sup> In the late eighteenth century it was understood to be an elite, and that its task, which in the main had been the responsibility of the Church, was to speak for and educate those who were not able to do it for themselves. This enlightened consensus also knew that communication had to be continuous, and that openness and visibility were of the essence. The word '*transparence*', today so much to the fore of the public arena, was equally a buzz-word in the eighteenth century. The written word, especially that in print, is the voice of opinion made visible for all to see. In both France and England from mid century, especially the 1760s, there is evidence of a profound interest in language and its written form, long before Edmund Burke attacked the French Revolution partly for the profound linguistic change which went with it. In France, Rousseau in his *De l'origine des langues* (1755), Condillac in his *Grammaire* and *Art d'écrire* (1760s), and Diderot in his long reflection on language in the *Encyclopédie* (1765) were interested in language as a tool for thought and knowledge, or as a vehicle for passions (Rousseau). For the English language, a proliferation of grammars such as Joseph Priestley's with his *Rudiments of English Grammar* (1761) or, after him, Benjamin Franklin with his *Scheme for a new alphabet and a reformed mode of spelling* (1779),<sup>15</sup> established that language

<sup>14</sup> For a fairly recent debate, see Baker, *Inventing...*; Bell, D., 'Public sphere, State, and Law', *French Historical Studies*, 17 (1991-92), pp.912-934; Maza, S., 'Women, the bourgeoisie, and the public sphere' in same, pp.935-950; Gordon, D., 'Philosophy, sociology and gender in the Enlightenment conception of public opinion', in same, pp.882-911; Goodman, D., 'Public sphere and private life', *History and Theory*, 31 (1991), pp.1-20; Klein, L., 'Gender and the public/private distinction in the eighteenth century: some questions about evidence and analytic procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), pp.97-109.

<sup>15</sup> See Looby, C., 'Phonetic and politics in Franklin's alphabet', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1



should be made clear and transparent to all. The gradual abandonment of Latin as the language of science and communication, accelerated in France by the Revolution and its campaign of French for all, is one of the major aspects of the linguistic shift which, for Burke, signified corruption of the social order as he knew it. He denounced the new use of language as a murderous tool in the hands of the Dissenters in England, of the Revolutionaries in France, and, before them, of the Encyclopedists and writers whose “intolerance of the tongue and of the pen occupied all the avenues of opinion”; he saw the writings of Rousseau, for instance, as leading directly to “the shameful evil” of the Revolution.<sup>16</sup> Such a conservative interpretation of the Revolution as a linguistic event prefigures Furet’s very similar interpretation, when he says “the French Revolution founds a society by means of language”.<sup>17</sup>

It was in the eighteenth century that the written word, therefore, came to be considered as *the* medium of the public sphere. I use ‘written word’ in its most comprehensive sense: manuscript and print, what was written and what was read, correspondence between private individuals or between constituted bodies, legally published or clandestine books and memoirs, periodicals and newspapers, pamphlets, and all the flood of ephemera which characterises the period. Indeed, the chosen period was the time when writing provided for the paradoxical conditions of both privacy and ‘publicity’, of private opinion kept private, and of private opinion publicly expressed. The professionals, the traders, women, the Dissenters in England and Wales, the Protestants in France, the Jews — all those who had limited

(1984), pp.1-34.

<sup>16</sup> Burke, B., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol.4. Oxford, 1907, pp.122-123, and p.302. See also Blakemore, S., *Burke and the Fall of Language the French Revolution as a Linguistic Event*, Hanover New Hampshire, 1988, esp. pp.90-107.

<sup>17</sup> Furet, F., *Penser la Révolution*, Paris, 1978, p.45.

or no access to the corridors of power then still in the hands of oligarchical bodies — were given a better chance to acquire status and social and economic power through the tool of the written word.<sup>18</sup> Even the established clergy became the indispensable partners of local administration, which they took over from a gentry relinquishing its traditional duties. Thus one could say that writing itself fostered its own cultural hegemony, as well as the emergence into power of the literate classes, through the accumulation of a ‘linguistic capital’ by which they differentiated themselves.<sup>19</sup> Again, the *Cahiers de Doléances* are a good instance of the channelling of the voice of the people via the enlightened bourgeois pen or, more likely, at least in their final stages, the pen of the gentlemen of the robe. Habermas does indeed define the public sphere of our period as the ‘bourgeois public sphere’.<sup>20</sup> Those belonging to it gained an identity through the installation of the written word as one of their emblems, and one of their sources of power and wealth.<sup>21</sup> The *people*, as opposed to the *public*, were confined to the domain of orality, or to the literacy of the primers. This is why revolutionary theatre audiences were considered as dangerous, because their reactions and judgement were seen as a too-direct democracy.<sup>22</sup> The

<sup>18</sup> There were loopholes of course to this disenfranchisement; as Goodwin, A., *The Friends of Liberty*, London, 1979, remarks, Dissenters could be admitted to public office ‘with a hazard’, that is without taking the oath (p.77).

<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu, *Ce que parler...*, p.43.

<sup>20</sup> Habermas, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, London, 1994 (transl., first published 1962), p.27.

<sup>21</sup> For a description of the establishment of a public of readers see: Raven, J., Small, H., Tadmor, N., eds., *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge, 1996; Darnton, R., *Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, New-York, 1995; Rose, J., ‘Rereading the English common reader: a preface to a history of audiences’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53 (1992), pp.47-70; Chartier, R., *The Cultural Use of Print in Early Modern France*, Princeton, 1987; Klancher, J., *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790-1832*, Madison-London, 1987; Rivers, I., ed., *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, Leicester, 1982.

<sup>22</sup> Maslan, S., ‘Resisting representation’, *Representations*, 52 (1995), pp.27-51.

revolutionary playwright Marie-Joseph Chénier claimed for the theatre the same freedoms as those granted to the press, as he thought the theatre to be the most important agent for the formation of public opinion, a public opinion not mediated by the written word. And we must not forget that opinion was also formed at the local and familial level through a set of relationships which had nothing to do with the written word, as we are reminded in *The Hanging Tree*: “attitudes embedded in local understandings and communal relationships” were the roots of opinion as much as reading.<sup>23</sup>

The remarkable expansion of the press at the time is another instance of the desire for the consumption of communication. Newspapers were the most direct products of the public sphere, as expressions of the private citizens’ opinions, feelings, ideas, and criticisms, to be consumed by others and to advertise yet others consumable goods. The Abbé Grégoire, one of the proponent at the Convention of “French for all”, saw it very clearly: newspapers are efficient “because everybody reads them”.<sup>24</sup> This private sphere made public, in the form of newspapers, periodicals, and correspondence, came under state control in the person of the Postmaster General, and became a great source of revenue. Moreover, the carriage of mail outside the official post routes also became a source of revenue for the private citizen. In turn, the efficient carrying of the mail brought about the necessity of having good roads, which were being built all over the country, one of the necessary ‘infrastructures’ of the Enlightenment alongside the written word.<sup>25</sup> It was a boom period for land surveyors, whose training was provided by many private academies. The association between commerce and communication is a strong one and, in the eighteenth century, the words commerce and conversation were often interchangeable. Commerce was

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<sup>23</sup> Gatrell, V.A.C., *The Hanging Tree*, Oxford, 1994, p.443.

<sup>24</sup> *Rapport sur la nécessité d’anéantir le patois et d’universaliser la langue française, Convention Nationale, 16 prairial, an deuxième de la République, 1794*, p.12.

<sup>25</sup> Laugero, G., ‘Infrastructures of Enlightenment: Road-making, the public sphere, and the emergence of literature’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29, 1 (1995), pp.45-67.

conversation by word or letter, as well as exchange of goods. The *Encyclopédie* defined commerce “in its general sense” as a *communication réciproque*.<sup>26</sup> For two weeks in 1847, the French postal administration carried out a survey of the circulation of letters in the whole country which showed that business and administrative letters made up almost 90 per cent of all letters exchanged, and that the provinces received more letters than they wrote.<sup>27</sup> This might show, among other obvious reasons, that metropolitan public opinion was taking its enlightening role seriously and making a point of keeping its members informed, or its lesser participants educated.

The proliferation of voluntary societies in the late eighteenth century is another example of the ‘authentic public sphere’, of the private made public, and of the avid consumption of written communication. All these societies relied on the power of the pen to register, record, correspond, and advertise. They were another way found by what was still essentially the ‘writing classes’ in that period, to create their own sphere outside the aristocratically controlled state or the absolute monarchy. Bourdieu’s concept of ‘distinction’ is applicable again here, especially in England, for in France the nobility was quite prominent in academies and masonic lodges, except during the years of the first Republic: enlightened public opinion, through its writing and its voluntary societies, tried to create a distinctive space for itself, and to differentiate itself from both the nobility and the lower orders. This coming together of private citizens, whether in academies, friendly societies, masonic lodges, corresponding societies, salons, clubs, and other public places, was the embodiment of this ‘sociability’ which, like ‘public opinion’, is an invention of the eighteenth century. In his article on ‘language’ in the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot argued that the

<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des sciences des arts et des métiers*, 1751-1780, repr. Stuttgart, 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Chartier, R., *La correspondance. Les usages de la lettre au dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris, 1991, p.18.

contributors to the latter must be "Men bound by a general interest in humankind and by a feeling of reciprocal benevolence". Daniel Gordon speaks of a veritable 'semantic surge', to describe the appearance at the time of the terms 'society', 'sociability', 'sociable', and 'social', and he could have added 'benevolence' to his list.<sup>28</sup>

Sociability is the source of public opinion: it binds members of the civil society together without the old hierarchies, and it implies equality, so that minds can express themselves freely and in a benevolent fashion, and share their talents. Indeed, this sharing of talent, this pedagogical side of sociability, is seized upon by the revolutionary authorities in France as a way of educating the people and propagating the republican message, to the detriment of school education. The Abbé Grégoire, again, in his famous *Rapport* to the Convention in 1794, suggested that friendly societies were the best vehicles for the spread of the French language, especially in the Provençal-speaking Midi where societies were particularly numerous. In England, the voluntary societies understood it as their mission to teach safe values to the poor by the intermediary of the printed word; hence the proliferation during our period of Sunday schools and, later, of the National and British schools. It is often under the impetus and sponsorship of societies, and their desire to communicate, that the new institutions of sociability and visibility were established: museums, art salons, libraries, botanical gardens, newsrooms, and bookclubs, where one could see and be seen, educate and be educated.<sup>29</sup> Condillac was pessimistic about the ability of governments to understand the value of a European free market,<sup>30</sup> but he was heeded by the 'culture producers': the sociability of the written word easily by-passed blockades and restrictive practices, and its consumption was undeterred by political

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<sup>28</sup> Gordon, D., *Citizens without Sovereignty. Equality and Sociability in French Thought 1670-1789*, Princeton, 1994, p.53.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>30</sup> Condillac, E. Bonnot de, *Le commerce et le gouvernement*, in coll. of texts ed. by Lefèvre, R., *Condillac ou la joie de vivre*, Paris, 1966, pp.178-181.

events, even if hampered by censorship at times.

The importance of writing as a saleable and consumable commodity has not been emphasised enough. Joan Appleby has defined 'three facets of consumption': self-indulgence, personal identity, and privacy.<sup>31</sup> These attributes had in fact already been perceived at the time as the dangerous virtues of writing. Hence the reluctance to teach writing or, in certain cases, even reading, especially to girls and the children of the poor. This is where we come to the uses of writing in connection with ideologies, writing being such a liberating tool of self-expression and individual opinion that it brought in its wake aspirations to liberty and equality, and in reaction to these new claims, the fight for the maintenance or the reinstatement of the established order as a barrier to widespread secularisation. In the last decade of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth centuries, writing permitted or even created the missionary spirit of the period, brought about by the desire to spread the ferment of revolution or, as a counterattack, by the felt need to evangelise the masses. Either way, this new 'public opinion', aided and abated by writing, was appropriated by the elites or, paradoxically, was used by the state to legitimize its actions. The dangerous potential of writing as a generator of resistance to state power explains the drastic system of censorship which existed in the France of the *Ancient Régime* (although it crumbled somewhat in the last years of the monarchy), and the repressive control of publishing and the press in England, as a reaction to the spread of revolutionary ideas. But then the French Revolution released the pen, and the unprecedented torrent of writing which characterises its early years. Even if repression and censorship made their quick comeback, they never returned to their prerevolutionary level; the world of the written word was changed for ever. This is the 'Age of the Pamphlet', which gives private opinions a public voice, uncensored, easily and quickly diffused. The pamphlet may represent the main agent of the

<sup>31</sup> 'Consumption in early modern thought', in Brewer, J., & Porter, R., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, London, 1993, p.172.

democratisation of reading and, as Roger Chartier points out, it brought about another form of revolution in reading habits: the end of the reading and re-reading the same book or few books.<sup>32</sup> Indeed the pamphlet reached a public which was not necessarily that of 'sociability'. It lent itself to public reading, because it was short and its style was direct, simple, and polemical because political; and it was cheap, much cheaper than newspapers. The *Bibliothèque Nationale* catalogues 13.608 of them, published during the period 1789-1799 and, because of their ephemeral character, this no doubt represents only a fraction of their total.<sup>33</sup> But not all pamphlets were political in content, or not overtly so: Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts*, for instance, were an eminently moral and religious crusade of the late 1790s, arguing for an imagined one nation of contented people.

In this general context of a developing public sphere, we have studied the specificity of two families, and how the written word gave them access to it. In each of the chosen towns, we shall follow the fate of a family through its own narrative: the Caussemilles in Draguignan, and the Bissets near Warwick.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the strength of Castle culture in Warwick itself, and the hold of the Castle on available land, forced the new urban leisure industry out of town to find space outside the walls, in Leamington Priors, soon to become Leamington Spa because of its sulphuric waters and the entrepreneurial spirit of a group of Warwick citizens.<sup>35</sup> It must be noted, however, that the middling sort of artisans and traders, or trader-manufacturers, have often been depicted as aspiring to promote their sons into the professional class. This pattern does not apply to either the Caussemilles or the

<sup>32</sup> Chartier, R., *Lecture et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1987, p.242; Darnton, R., 'Readers respond to Rousseau' in *The Great Cat Massacre*, London, 1985, pp.209-249, and Darnton, *Forbidden...*, pp.217-219.

<sup>33</sup> Darnton, R. & Roche, D., *Revolution in Print, the Press in France 1775-1800*, Berkeley, 1989, p.165.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 1.

Bissets, as in both cases the sons stayed in trading and manufacturing.

The two families belonged to and were defined by both urban cultures, the old and the new, as well as by the local economy, even if the Bissets of Leamington had actually imported the new culture from outside in order to sell it. Both families were very much part of the economy of their town, and were defined by it. Because Draguignan's industry and commerce were almost entirely tied up with the agriculture of its hinterland, the business of the Caussemilles was in trading and the manufacture of local produce. Yet their place among the people who counted was secured by their education, which itself allowed them to participate in the cultural sociability of their town. Their family letters and impeccable business ledgers helped us trace their ascent into the distinguished social circles of their town, because of the obsession of the head of this extended family about the necessity of good writing. Similarly, while the Bissets were busy creating the new products that the leisure classes were seeking in the leisure park which was Leamington, they were establishing their place amongst the worthies of the town, as James Bisset's memoirs and other writings testify. Both the Caussemilles and the Bissets are emblematic of the acquisition of distinction through the acquisition of capital invested in the written word. Both families were indeed chosen for their writing output, a rare occurrence in the local archives for people of the middling sort in the period.

What do such comparisons tell us? First, that categorisations and generalisations must be done cautiously, especially in the face of such resilient 'fragments of reality' as local and family culture. Finding comparable traits, either in similarity or difference, can be quite exciting, but it is also a source of doubts. Is such a comparative study justified? Yes, in the sense that the two chosen towns are comparable county towns in population, function, and place in their regional hierarchy. The two families have fairly similar backgrounds: artisan turned entrepreneur or merchant-manufacturer. I could be accused of having chosen



examples to fit my argument, for indeed the two towns I have selected are the ideal setting for my purpose: they are administrative towns, county towns, with little industry apart from service industries and, especially in the case of Warwick, few landed gentry actually living in the town. They were towns where the way to join the ranks of ‘those who count’ was through education and culture. My justification is that the creation and acquisition of a cultural capital happened elsewhere also, in places like Manchester, Birmingham, or Lille. James Bisset, who is one of my literati, had already made his mark in Birmingham before he moved to the Warwick area.

But there is also a more powerful reason which justifies the comparative approach, and helps in steering it away from the exoticism of difference: the link in their story is the impact of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. This link is indeed important for comparative purposes, both at the transnational level and the national level, for it could be argued that Provence was a very particular case in France, or the Midlands in England. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Haupt conclude their wide-ranging comparative study of the *petite bourgeoisie* in Europe by stressing the inadequacy of comparative analysis at the national level, especially in the study of family, culture, and sociability.<sup>36</sup> John Smail also, in his study of middle-class culture, stresses the importance of local factors in the study of class.<sup>37</sup> This last argument certainly applies, at least to the period under study. However, the transnational aspect of the formation of a middle class language is what I have also stressed here.

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A comparison of the printed and written sources used in this study for both towns

<sup>36</sup> Crossick, G., & Haupt, H-G., *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780-1914*. London and New York, 1994, p.232.

<sup>37</sup> Smail, J., *The Origins of Middle-Class Culture: Halifax Yorkshire 1660-1780*. Ithaca and London, 1994, p.15.

shows an interesting difference: Warwick archives yielded more letters, commonplace books, diaries, literature, private pamphlets, and newspapers. In Draguignan, apart from the vast Caussemille correspondence, I found more official documents, especially from the time of the Revolution: circular letters from the various ministries in Paris, official pamphlets and posters, bills, laws, and edicts. This is no doubt a reflection of the political events, but it might also emphasise the difference between the oral culture of Provence under centralised government, and the Protestant culture of the written word in Warwick.

In addition, my aim is to show that the creation of the social distinction I am describing was obtained by the acquisition of a culture *sans frontières*, which transcended social and political differences in both countries. Indeed, despite the upheavals of the time, the establishment of what we can now call a middle class culture went grinding on. For instance, English and French novels, letter-writing manuals, school books, and children's literature were extensively distributed by the ubiquitous circulating libraries in each country, and flowed between the two countries; and, even in the middle of the Napoleonic wars, French fashions had pride of place in the women's pages of national and provincial newspapers in England, and English novels were translated and widely read in France. Thus Edmund Burke's predictions of social chaos brought about by such second rate writers, in his opinion, as the French revolutionaries, or the radical Dissenters, "the well-assorted warehouses of the dissenting congregations" as he called them,<sup>38</sup> were not vindicated. Burke might have been suffering from eighteenth-century *fin de siècle* anxiety which has been described as a fear of loss,<sup>39</sup> and he did not see that this linguistic activity was codifying a new order. This new order was established by and for those who were the happy possessors of a linguistic capital which, in fact, did not borrow much from the 'uneducated' language of the *sans-culottes*. In England, the

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<sup>38</sup> Burke, *Reflections*..., p.12.

<sup>39</sup> Goulemot, J.M., 'Dictionnaires et Encyclopédies', *Critique*, 608-609 (1998), pp.1051-1063.

radical writers, and the Dissenters in particular, changed their radical language in the mid 1790s, under the pressures of repression. Their writings turned to the highly consumable and non-political language of school textbooks, guides, and novels, as we shall see later.<sup>40</sup> In France too, there was a shift imposed by the censorship of the Directoire and the Empire, from the flourishing press and ephemeral literature to book publishing. But, whatever the changes, the power of the written words as emblem of the middle classes remained and was reinforced. The following chapters aim to show this function of the written word in creating what Raymond Williams has called “knowable communities”, whether they are set in the towns chosen, or in the wider world to which they belong.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Chapters 1, 3 and 5.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, St Albans, 1975 (first pub. London, 1973), pp.202-220.

## Chapter 1

### A tale of two county towns

In the eighteenth century, towns acquired a culture of their own, increasing the divide between town and country while, at the same time, they changed from closed entities within defining walls to more open ones which, to begin with, defined themselves by their administrative function.<sup>1</sup> This town/country divide was accentuated by the spread of a new urban architecture inspired by a classical, rather than a vernacular, tradition. The new service economy offered opportunities for consumption and leisure quite distinct from country and castle culture,<sup>2</sup> although the pleasures of country gentry like horse-racing became part of the recreations of towns like Warwick, which was surrounded by the hundreds of acres of land belonging to the Castle. In the highly urbanised Basse-Provence, however, culture (including elite culture) had long been urban, since the gentry lived mostly in the towns. In our period in both countries, a contrasting change occurred which transformed the old hierarchies of towns within their regions. In Britain, towns became more and more defined by their economical importance, to the detriment of traditional county and market towns;<sup>3</sup> in France, although economic activity had begun to define towns, the carving-up of the country into *départements* in 1790 created entities which were not reflections of economic or

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<sup>1</sup> See Lepetit, B., *The Pre-industrial Urban System: France, 1740-1840*, Cambridge, 1994 (transl. first pub. 1988), pp. 53 & 63-66.

<sup>2</sup> In Warwick the number of trades catering for more and more needs and pleasures trebled over the eighteenth century; see Beier, A.L., 'The social problems of an Elizabethan county town: Warwick 1580-1590', in Clark, P., ed., *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England*, Leicester, 1981, p.53; Field, W., *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town and Castle of Warwick*, H. Sharpe, Warwick, 1815, p.76.

<sup>3</sup> Borsay, P., ed., *The Eighteenth-Century Town, a Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820*, London, 1990, pp.78-79.

demographic hierarchies. This new administrative division of France had been the work of property owners and professionals who “built the administrative space of a society dominated by landlords.”<sup>4</sup> This is why, for instance, in the *département* of the Bouches-du Rhône, Aix became the county town, or *chef-lieu*, instead of the much bigger and economically busier Marseille; and why first Grasse and then Draguignan, but not the much bigger town of Toulon, took over the role of administrative centre for the Var.<sup>5</sup> And this is why these *chef-lieux*, which took off for the most part in 1800 with fast developing new administrations headed by *préfets*, became more like typical eighteenth-century English county towns.<sup>6</sup> This factor, together with the fact that Provence was very urbanised compared with most areas of France,<sup>7</sup> makes Draguignan a comparable entity with a town such as Warwick, in an England with already 30 per cent of its population living in towns by the early 1800s.<sup>8</sup>

The appearance of town guides and directories in the second half of the eighteenth century marked the new character by which towns wanted to be defined: that of sociability, openness, and communication or, shall we say, ‘commerce’ understood in its meaning of social exchange and trade. The first printed directory outside London was Sketchley’s 1763 *Directory of Birmingham*, a fairly dry catalogue of ‘principal inhabitants’ and traders; then, twenty years later, the Introduction to the *Universal British Directory* stated a much more modern purpose, and a good early definition of urban sociability:

Persons or families unconnected with business whose pursuit is  
pleasure in travelling or amusement in visiting curiosities and antiquities

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<sup>4</sup> Roncayolo, M., ‘Le Département’, in Nora, P., ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3, *Les France*, 1, Paris, 1992, p.897.

<sup>5</sup> Although there were other reasons as far as Toulon was concerned, like its counter-revolutionary stance in 1793, as we shall see later in this Chapter.

<sup>6</sup> Lepetit, *The Pre-industrial...*, p.271.

<sup>7</sup> Duby, G., ed., *Histoire de la France urbaine*, Paris, 1981, p.565.

<sup>8</sup> de Vries, J., *European Urbanisation 1500-1800*, Cambridge, Mass., 1984, pp.320-321.

of the country will find an agreeable companion and an ample guide in this directory. They will not only have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the names and occupations of the principal inhabitants of every town even before they pass through it but will be directed to the best inns and most agreeable roads...[so that] connections might be formed and transactions in business negotiated.

James Bisset, who we will meet at length in the rest of this work, brought the genre to a work of art, introducing poetry and illustrations in his *Magnificent Guide or Grand Directory for the town of Birmingham* of 1799, followed by his *Descriptive Guide to Leamington Priors* of 1814, which was totally devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. The same is true of the rival one written by the Reverend William Field for Warwick, although in a more sober and informative vein. In fact towns and their guides became so much in demand that they even inspired Miss Prickett's three-decker novel, *Warwick Castle*, a semi-historical romance of court and castle, mixed with touristic information about Birmingham, Warwick, and the Leamington waters, which, in a bold use of inter-textuality, even mentioned James Bisset's just-published guide.<sup>9</sup> In France, as well as guides, we have from the early 1800s the official *Statistiques Générales de la France*, written by the *Préfets* at the request of Napoléon. They were very comprehensive if not always reliable accounts, often also written with a flourish in the rhetorical style learnt in the *Collèges*. *Préfet* Fauchet's reports from Draguignan certainly fit this description.

If towns in general became more open, the character of English *county* towns changed towards more secrecy until the 1815s and even until 1835. With the increase in local administrative duties and activities, what had been discussed openly in quarter sessions then came to be decided "in private meetings at the discretion of little knots of squires and parsons."<sup>10</sup> It prompted Joseph Parkes, youngest son of John Parkes, a

<sup>9</sup> Miss Prickett, *Warwick Castle, A Historical Novel*, London, 1815, 3 vols.

<sup>10</sup> Webb, S.& B., *English Local Government; the Parish and the County*, London, 1963, (first ed.

Unitarian manufacturer in Warwick whom we will meet later, to write in his long pamphlet against secrecy in Corporation affairs that “publicity is the best and only effectual safeguard of integrity”, and is very much to “the Public’s advantage.”<sup>11</sup> By contrast, there was a move in France towards greater transparency (though less so again after the first revolutionary years), and the idea of public opinion and its information became pre-eminent. In both countries, however, towns were increasingly becoming places of cultural openness, of open spaces, “spaces for gazes”,<sup>12</sup> where culture and leisure were on display, advertised, and offered in the guides, the libraries, the museums, the archives, the botanical gardens, the promenades, the assembly rooms and reading rooms, the theatres, and the press, thus forming a veritable “web of visibilities.”<sup>13</sup> In both countries, this new town culture was born from a reaction to exclusion: in England partly associated with the dynamic reaction of the Dissenters to their estrangement from the public sphere of politics, as in Birmingham or Warwick; in France it could be described as a republican reaction to the exclusivism of the *Ancien Régime*. These general trends, however, were often slowed down, altered, or profoundly marked by the 25 years of the Wars with France, almost two thirds of the period under study. A legacy of these years was a new radicalism for England which was able to manifest itself later in the 1830s, and a new bourgeois conservatism for France.<sup>14</sup>

During this period of development of an urban culture and of urban change in both countries, the old rituals of urban life were also maintained, although in diminishing numbers: guild processions, popular holidays and festivals, a whole body of civic culture.<sup>15</sup> A product of these changes and this continuity was the formation of what

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1922), pp.552-555.

<sup>11</sup> Parkes, J., *The governing Charter of the Borough of Warwick*, London, 1827.

<sup>12</sup> Rose, N., ‘Towards a critical sociology of freedom’, in Joyce, P., ed., *Class*, Oxford, 1995, p.216.

<sup>13</sup> *ditto*.

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the Working Class*, pp.660-661.

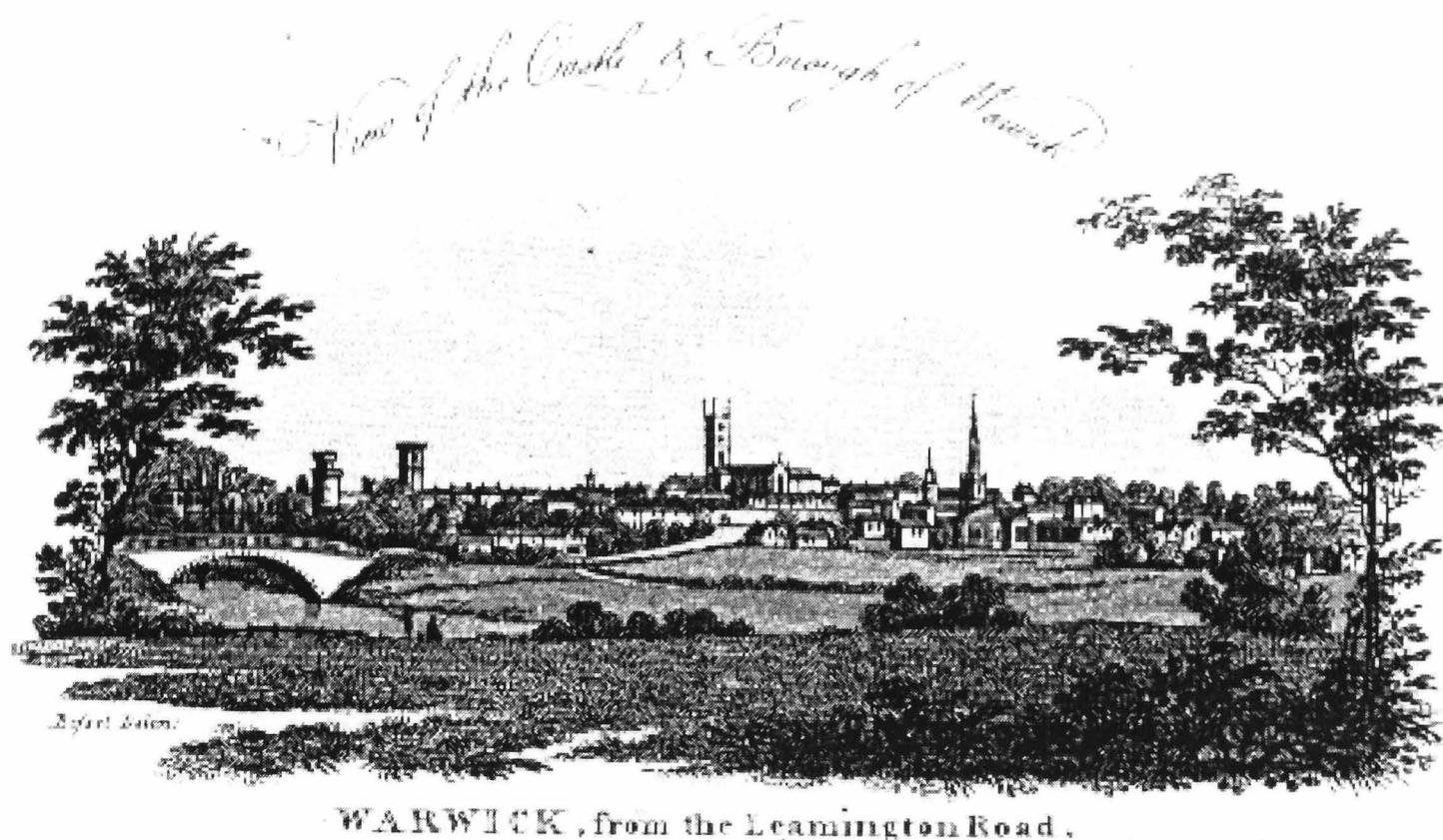
Roche called *sociabilité culturelle*,<sup>16</sup> which allowed those who didn't belong to the old public sphere, or to the oligarchies in power, access to the new 'true' public sphere of social and cultural power. In both our towns, we witness the accession of the trading and manufacturing class into this new sociability. It is a culture fabricated for themselves by the educated and literate classes. But let our two towns speak for themselves.

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<sup>15</sup> Borsay, *The Eighteenth...*, p.38, and Duby, *Histoire...*, pp.500-507.

<sup>16</sup> Roche, D., *Les Républicains des Lettres*, Paris, 1988, p.222.





It has a good trade in malt, and here are frequent horse-races. In fine, this place is reckoned a pretty retirement for gentlemen of small estates, and there is very good company here.

*The Universal British Directory*, s.v. Warwick, 1793-1798.

From medieval times up to the twentieth century, Warwick has been a county town dominated by the Castle and its Earls, and has been the seat of the Assizes, the Quarter Sessions, the county gaol, and the county bridewell. A directory of the 1790s described it as being “distant from London ninety-three miles, ten from Coventry, twenty-one from Birmingham, ten from Southam, and eight from Stratford-upon-Avon. All the ways leading to it, from the four cardinal points, are cut through a rock of free-stone, on which it stands.”<sup>17</sup> And, in 1815, William Field, the town Unitarian minister, described enthusiastically the situation of Warwick:

Nothing can well be imagined more happily chosen, than the situation of Warwick... The fine rocky eminence on which the town stands, is itself

<sup>17</sup> *The Universal British Directory*, London, 1793-1798, facsimile edition, King's Lynn, 1993. *The Pigot's Directory* for 1828-29 (pp.761-842 for Warwickshire) places Warwick only 92 miles from London and 20 from Birmingham. The spectacular growth of these towns has made them closer to Warwick!

seated in the midst of a spacious and beautiful amphitheatre, formed by a circuit of hills, gently rising, at the distance of about two or three miles, and bounding its prospect on every side... This whole surrounding tract is naturally fertile, and highly cultivated; intersected every where with remarkably fine hedges, to which great attention is paid; richly embellished with flourishing trees and woods; and beautifully watered by the meanderings of the Avon, which is here a considerable stream, and its tributary river, the Leam, which joins it near Warwick. This delightful situation is further recommended by the salubrity of its atmosphere, which is pure, dry, and so warm, that the seasons are usually a fortnight earlier here, than in many places not more distant than twenty or thirty miles. The town has witnessed many a great changes, especially in consequence of the dreadful fire which, in 1694, destroyed so large a part of it. But this calamity, deplorable as it is was at the time, proved in the end truly beneficial. For from its ashes, the town once more arose, erected upon a plan of greater spaciousness, regularity and beauty: and thus, in its improved appearance, and especially in its superior convenience and healthfulness, the most important advantages have been secured, and transmitted down to all its future inhabitants.<sup>18</sup>

The growth of county government, which was general in the country in the seventeenth century, gave the town increasing importance, especially when the Corporation regained its original powers with the 1694 Charter. By the eighteenth century, the Corporation had become an oligarchy supported by the Earls. It was periodically under attack for corruption and misuse of charity funds, or for excessive spending. This interference of the Castle in town affairs caused the formation of an opposition to challenge it, and even incited both the Gentlemen's Party and the

<sup>18</sup> Field, W., *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town of Warwick*, H. Sharpe, Warwick, 1815, pp.45-46.

Independents to unite for a while, especially against the wars on the continent. The *Universal British Directory* for 1793 describes this struggle for influence very simply: “there have been frequent struggles here for superiority between the Earl of Warwick-castle [*sic*], adjoining to this town, and the independent party.”<sup>19</sup> In 1797, the Reverend Field attacked the Castle in a bitterly hostile Letter,<sup>20</sup> accusing the Earl of arrogant interference in his opposition to a “Resolution proposed and carried, at a General Meeting of the inhabitants of Warwick on the Subject of the New Assessed Tax Bill.” He called it a “miserable *conspiracy* hatched within the walls of your Lordship [*sic*] castle”, and he went on to remind him that it was to the present corrupt administration that he owed “the profitable posts” of Lord Lieutenant of the County and of Colonel of the Warwick Cavalry. To demonstrate the hold of the Castle on the town, Field finally concluded his pamphlet with the comment that, out of the 212 signatures to the Earl’s Protest, only 14 were not dependants of the Castle.

The Corporation had the right to appoint the Recorder for the quarter sessions and, during most of the seventeenth century and the whole of the period under study, it was a member of the Grevilles, the Earl’s family, who held the title. It was the Earl, too, who proposed the members of Parliament for Warwickshire, again usually members of his family, another instance of the close link between Town and Castle. The Recorder, in turn, named his Clerk of the Peace; this post was held continuously by the same family, the Hunts, between 1789 and 1873: Charles from 1789 to 1802, Thomas until 1819, and William until 1873.<sup>21</sup> We will find, below, yet more instances of

<sup>19</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, and see Styles, P., ‘The Corporation of Warwick 1660-1835’, *Birmingham Archeological Society Transactions*, 59, (1935; OUP, 1938), pp.9-122.

<sup>20</sup> Field, W., *A Letter to the Right Honorable the Earl of Warwick on his Opposition to the Resolution proposed and carried at a General Meeting of the Inhabitants of Warwick on the Subject of the New Assessed Tax Bill*, 1798, printed by the author and sold in London, Birmingham, Coventry and Warwick, WCRO, C920 (P).

<sup>21</sup> Morgan, P., *Warwickshire Printer’s Notices 1799-1866*, Dugdale Society, 1970. The advantage of this continuity, the author remarks, is that, although few of these Notices have survived in the rest of

continuity in this town of continuities.

The population of Warwick grew slowly but steadily from about 4,600 in 1730 to 5,592 by the first census of 1801; then there was a faster rate of increase during the twenty years of industrial expansion of the town and the consequent immigration that followed. In 1821, it had grown to 8,235. However, the importance of the town was greater than these numbers would seem to indicate because of its role as the seat of the shire's administration.

It was divided into two parishes: St Mary's with its dominating church, and the poorer and smaller parish of St Nicholas, with its church just outside the walls. The churchwardens and overseers of the parishes had the task of applying the poor laws, and levying soldiers for the wars either by ballot, by nomination, or by asking for volunteers, the numbers being allotted by the Justices; and these were great powers indeed. In 1795, for instance, Warwick was asked to send 193 men for the Navy, and all the undesirables, the idle, the disorderly, and those who could not prove that they exercised a lawful trade were levied. They, together with the labourers and the 'noisome trades', lived in definite areas of the town. This social 'zoning', Peter Borsay remarks, was enhanced and regulated when the town center was rebuilt early in the century.<sup>22</sup> Field confirmed this in his description of the town in 1815: Coten End, Saltisford, and West Street were chiefly inhabited "by the more laborious, but not least useful, class of the community."<sup>23</sup> It was in the Saltisford, for instance, that the Parkes brothers, the biggest manufacturers in the town, built for their workers houses described at the time as "airy and comfortable habitations."<sup>24</sup>

the country, here they and other records were well preserved by the Hunts, particularly because of the antiquarian interest of the last of the Hunt dynasty of Clerks of the Peace.

<sup>22</sup> Borsay, P., 'The English Urban Renaissance, Landscape and Leisure in the Provincial Towns c.1660-1770', PhD Thesis, Lancaster University, 1981, p.145.

<sup>23</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, p.56.

The main bulk of the population, which lived in these poorer quarters, comprised the paupers who appear in the parish Poor Law records, the labourers, and a fair number of the artisans and traders. Because of the the important population of artisans, shopkeepers, traders, manufacturers, and professionals, and the vicinity of the Castle, there must have been an important group of domestic servants. Indeed, each of these households had at least one, and usually two or more.<sup>25</sup> In the columns of the *Warwick Advertiser* of 3 February 1810 there are adverts for “Upper Servants”, “a Parlour Maid who can also do Pickling”, “a Servant Man to wait occasionally at Table, and who must know how to milk a Cow and look after a Horse is wanted in a Tradesman’s Family”, and, on 3 November 1810, “a Butler, a Cook and a Wet Nurse” who were wanted in a “small and regular Family.”

Who were amongst the middling classes or ‘the better orders’ as they were often called, those who might see themselves as representing the ‘enlightened public opinion’? There were physicians like Drs Taylor and Lambe, who continued the erudite tradition established by their predecessors Drs Landor and Johnston, and who played a prominent role in promoting the waters of Leamington; well-educated traders-become-manufacturers like the Unitarians William and John Parkes, their sons, and the Cromptons, their partners in business; bankers like John Tomes who represented Warwick in Parliament, had nonconformist sympathies, and fought for the freedom of the town; ministers like William Field, minister at the Unitarian Chapel, and Dr Samuel Parr, a High-Church minister who was also a renowned scholar, prolific writer and talker, and, although a Hatton resident living two miles out of Warwick, was the centre of this circle of Whig friends which also included some gentry — like Bertie and Mary

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<sup>24</sup> *ditto*, p.61.

<sup>25</sup> In fact, Mrs William Parkes, a Warwick authoress and parishioner of the Reverend Field, recommended 6 servants as a good number for a fairly modest household in her *Domestic Duties or Instructions to Young Married Ladies*, published in London in 1825.

Greatheed and, more distantly, Sir John Throckmorton who, along with the Dormer family, belonged to the local Catholic community. A good number of the professional classes active in county affairs, such as the assizes and quarter sessions, also lived in the town: some of the Justices, their Clerks, the Recorder and deputy Recorders, the Treasurers, the Aldermen, and the Lieutenant of the County Militia (Lord Warwick from 1795). As Philip Styles remarks, their presence in the town meant that the county was “practically ruled by the town” from the 1790s.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the Earls of Warwick,<sup>27</sup> Lord Archer and Lord Dormer, and the Greatheeds, the nobility and landed gentry of Warwickshire lived out of town, although they did own town property which they leased out. These were powerful families, like the Newdigates of Arbury and the Feildings of Newnham Paddox, who were high Tories of influence. I have already mentioned the Throckmortons of Coughton Court who, as Catholic Recusants, often joined the pro-reform camp. The Lowes of Ettington, a Quaker family, seem to have been quite influential in the spreading of the Friends’ faith, but they kept a low profile in the affairs of the town. Of the gentry of Warwickshire, the Reverend William Field says that they contained “perhaps more than in any other county, the highest toryism.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, in the 1760s, a Gentlemen’s Party was formed which, from time to time, allied itself to the Earls; this was at the time when the gentry began to move into the town, attracted by the elegant new houses rebuilt after the fire of 1694, no longer in the vernacular bricks but in what was seen as the more genteel Georgian style.

We have seen that the ‘cultural elite’ in the town, mostly middling classes which included traders and manufacturers as well a few landed gentry, was strongly linked

<sup>26</sup> Styles, ‘The Corporation of Warwick, 1660-1835’, *Birmingham Archeological Society Transactions*, 59, (1935), p.102.

<sup>27</sup> In 1788 the Castle owned 50 houses in the town centre, and in 1806 over 100. See *Warwick Town Maps 1610-1851*, prepared by WCRO, published by Warwick Museum, n.d circa 1990.

<sup>28</sup> Field, W., *Memoirs of the Reverend Samuel Parr*. London, 1828, p.138.

with membership of religious denominations, which were a determining element in town politics and its public sphere. The overall number of ministers was important for the size of the town: sixteen of them were listed in the 1830 West's *Directory*, many of whom had been long established. There was a strong Established Church presence: St Mary's Church was where the Castle and the gentry went. Yet there were among the Anglicans some radical, if not evangelical, elements: Dr Parr, rather exaggeratedly nicknamed the 'Jacobinical parson',<sup>29</sup> was a colourful figure of some national eminence, frequently in battle with "the high churchmen of Warwick." He was, for instance, strongly opposed to the 'War Fasts' or 'Days of Humiliation', because he saw them as begetters of 'bigoted nationalism'.<sup>30</sup> The Dissenting community had been well established in the town since the mid-seventeenth century: the Baptists, the Unitarian and Independent Churches, and the Quakers, who especially prospered after Fox's visit to the town in 1655 and had a Meeting House in the High Street, and finally a growing Methodist presence. The Unitarians, who also had their church in the High Street, were prominent members of the Whig party, and represented the much more radical element of the town intelligentsia, thanks to the Reverend Field, a good friend of Joseph Priestley of Birmingham, whose influence and vicinity made its mark in the town. He came to William Field's ordination and, on this occasion, the Anglican Dr Parr established a long-lasting and very supportive friendship with him, and it could be then that Parr was invited to join the Lunar Society in Birmingham. For the size of the town, therefore, the various denominations were richly represented and, according to William Field, lived in exceptional harmony:

Perhaps there are few towns of the same population where more varieties of religious opinions exist; and yet where all its inhabitants dwell together in greater harmony and peace ... intermingling in all the

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<sup>29</sup> Derry, W., *Dr Parr, A Portrait of the Whig Johnson*, Oxford, 1966, p.128.

<sup>30</sup> Field, *Memoirs...*, pp.302 & 395. These 'fast days' were proclaimed by the Government during the Wars with France. Juliet Barker mentions them as one of the numerous tasks of the more compliant Reverend Brontë in Yorkshire, in *The Brontës*, London, 1995, p.41.

offices of social life. This is to be ascribed much, no doubt, to the benign and happy influence of his own liberality of sentiment, and his own benevolence of spirit, which a GREAT DIVINE [Dr Parr], living in our immediate vicinity, exerts and diffuses, in a wide circle, around him.<sup>31</sup>

Relationships of the liberal minded with the ‘higher churchmen’ were, however, not harmonious. The Reverend Field had a brave and, at times, virulent battle with them, and they inspired some of his best pamphlets, as we shall later see. Unlike the Birmingham radical Dissenters, he did not keep a low profile under the Church and King repression, although he did eventually move out of Warwick to Leamington in the early 1800s, probably because the weight of the Establishment was getting too much for him because, as he said himself, he differed “from many [in Warwick] in certain political, and from more in certain religious opinions, which he conceives to be of no small importance.”<sup>32</sup> Another reason for his move was economic necessity: he had fourteen children to feed and, like James Bisset, as we shall see, knew that the spa, Leamington Priors, which was rising at Warwick’s door, with its population avid for culture, would find use for his pedagogical talents.

The town’s industrial development can also be attributed to its strong Dissenting presence. François Crouzet remarks that “in Britain, the Dissenters and Scotsmen played a major role in the Industrial Revolution because, thanks to the Dissenting academies, and the much more advanced Scottish educational system, they were the best educated section of the middle class.”<sup>33</sup> (He adds that French businessmen in comparison had a more elementary education, or a purely classical one, and we shall see later if this applies to our French town.) Up to our period, Warwick manufacturing

<sup>31</sup> Field, W., *Letters addressed to the Calvinistic Christians of Warwick*. Warwick, 1820, WCRO C285.

<sup>32</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, in his ‘Advertisement’.

<sup>33</sup> Crouzet, F., *Britain Ascendant: Comparative Studies in Franco-British Economic History*, Cambridge, 1990 (transl., first pub. 1985), p.31.



activity had been rather dormant. There were many causes of this: its bad situation where means of communications were concerned — the Avon was not navigable, and it was by-passed by important roads; the vicinity of such industrial centres as Coventry and Birmingham, which prevented it from becoming a centre of trade and industry; and, finally, perhaps the overwhelming presence of the Castle. However, the last few years of the eighteenth century saw the beginning of an expansion, which was not so much part of the country-wide industrial revolution as the outcome of three events. One was the opening of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal in 1793, and of the Warwick and Napton Canal in 1800, and the second, the wartime requirements for goods. (Indeed, the ‘industrial revolution’ was very short-lived in Warwick — most of the industries and wholesale trade created then had folded by 1820 after the wars were over.<sup>34</sup>) The third was the presence in Warwick of an important group of Dissenters, who were the biggest employers: the Unitarian Parkes-Crompton-Brookhouse partnership, which had over 500 workers in their worsted and cotton spinning manufactory, and the Messrs Smart, Quakers, who had 50 hands for cotton spinning. Cotton weaving employed another 200 hands in Messrs Parker’s manufactory; Joseph Parker came briefly to Warwick from Manchester during this period, and his religion is so far unknown, but Manchester did have a strong Dissenting tradition.<sup>35</sup> Unlike Draguignan, with its manufacturing activity closely linked with its agricultural hinterland, as we shall see, Warwick’s industrial activity was linked to war requirements, and its raw materials was imported from outside the county. Thus, for example, Joseph Parker’s cotton trading was entirely with Manchester, his home town, to which he also sold the finished product.

The spectacular growth of Leamington, on Warwick’s doorstep, from the village Leamington Priors to the town Leamington Spa, was almost entirely promoted by

<sup>34</sup> *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (VCH), *Warwickshire*, Oxford, 1964, vol. 8, p.508.

<sup>35</sup> VCH, 8, p.508, and Field, *An Historical...*, pp.76-78.

Warwick doctors and Warwick capital.<sup>36</sup> It was also advertised by local writers: half a dozen guides were published during the ten years after Leamington was mentioned in the *Guide to all the watering and sea bathing places for 1813*.<sup>37</sup> *The Universal British Directory* of 1793-1798 has just one line about Leamington Priors, and that about its church, but the *Pigot's Commercial Directory* for 1828 gives it three full pages, thus registering the very rapid rise to "great eminence" of what was, by then, ranked among "the most elegant and celebrated watering places."<sup>38</sup> Many Warwick tradespeople had a shop in Leamington, and the spa brought visitors and trading activity to Warwick, although it was, at the same time, in competition with it for new developments in the service and leisure industry, especially in education. From 1808, the columns of the *Warwick Advertiser* gave Leamington an increasing amount of space and the list of 'Arrivals' of gentlefolks desirous to take the waters grew longer and longer. (Since then, Warwick has had to wait almost two hundred years for a second boom similar to this one at the turn of the eighteenth century, and brought about this time by the installation of the new sewerage works around 1975 and the opening of the M40 in 1990.) However we learn in January 1806 from the Editor of the *Warwick Advertiser* that "The roads have been improved, buildings have increased, manufactories have been erected and its population has been nearly doubled. The county is proverbial throughout the globe for the exquisite perfection of its manufactures, and it is grateful to perceive that Warwick itself is in a fair way of furnishing, at not a very distant period, its full proportion to that celebrity." His wish has not been entirely fulfilled. But at least the activity created in the town by the rich neighbouring farming community was considerable. This enthusiastic editor, in his 1809 New Year's message to his readers, claimed that "In an agricultural point of view, we believe, Warwick Market has been for some time the largest in this part of the

<sup>36</sup> For the study of the building of Leamington, see Arnison, C.J., 'The Speculative Development of Leamington Spa 1800-1830', MA Thesis, University of Leicester, 1980, and VCH, 8, p.509.

<sup>37</sup> pp.276-277 for Leamington.

<sup>38</sup> *The Pigot and Co's National Commercial Directory for 1828-29*, London, pp.761-842 for Warwickshire.

Kingdom, and is, consequently, attended by the most eminent Breeders and Growers of this and all adjacent counties." (We must remember that his best source of advertising came from the farmers) The rapid development of Leamington, mentioned earlier, benefited some of the inhabitants of Warwick in interesting ways: the new town was built on the 65 acres of land belonging to Bertie Greatheed of Guy's Cliffe, Warwick; the spa water was pumped by a highly modern Boulton and Watt steam engine built by John Parkes of Warwick, the same kind of engine as he built for his cotton mill; his brother William was involved in the building of Leamington's rather grand Assembly Room on the Parade; the Toms and Russell Bank of Warwick invested extensively in the new town; and, finally, two Warwick medical doctors, Dr Lambe and Dr Middleton, contributed to spreading the fame of the spa water by publishing learned treatises on its beneficial properties.<sup>39</sup> One could say that Leamington owed its success to the Dissenting spirit of enterprise which broke out of the straightjacket of genteel Warwick. Even Reverend Field, while still preaching in Warwick, moved out to this non-conformist mecca in the 1810s, and opened a classical academy in 'Leam House', his new residence, on the Warwick side of Leamington. Other Warwick inhabitants followed this move to what had become, for a while, the town's leafy suburb; for example, the Quaker Benjamin Smart sold his cotton mill and became the biggest property owner in Leamington.<sup>40</sup>

In 1816, there was another event which, like the demise of the manufactories a few years later, contributed to the increase of pauperism in the county: the disbanding of the Warwick Volunteer Militia, and other militia elsewhere in the country. The impact of the Napoleonic Wars was considerable: the loss of lives, although not as extensive as in France, unemployment, extreme poverty and often starvation, fear, and insecurity all around. The people of Warwickshire were then confronted with an unprecedented

<sup>39</sup> Chaplin, R., 'The Rise of Royal Leamington Spa', *Warwickshire History*, 2, (1972-73), pp.13-29.

<sup>40</sup> Arnison, *The Speculative Development...*, p.61.

wave of crime, and footpads were rife on the county roads. In the winter of 1816-17, the soup kitchen which had been established in the town in 1799, served soup daily and a slice of beef twice a week to 4000 people, half of the population.<sup>41</sup> There were more convictions for larceny in one year than in the whole of the preceding 25 years, and the gaol, built for just over a hundred prisoners, was overcrowded with two hundred awaiting trial. For the first time in its long history, the administration of the county had to change, under the increasing pressure by a standardising government, from a voluntary and amateurish institution to an organised machine, a change which had started elsewhere in the late eighties but was slow to reach Warwick, probably because of the dominance of its Castle and oligarchy. According to Philip Styles, there were three main causes for this change from “informal paternalism” in administration — first the French wars; second and much more importantly but less directly, the increase of duties the corporation had to face due to social changes (registering Friendly Societies, keeping the peace during elections, overseeing the relief to militiamen’s families, prison reform, etc); and, finally, coping with the the increase in crime already mentioned — and he describes this change as an “avalanche.”<sup>42</sup> Public whipping was still a common occurrence up to the 1820s, but then transportation, hitherto unknown in the Warwick Quarter Sessions, became a regular form of punishment, even for petty crimes: there were 796 transportations between 1801 and 1837. A private way of confronting the new situation was the creation of charitable and grass-roots institutions like the Ladies Charity, the School of Industry, the Dispensary, the Savings Bank, and Friendly Societies.<sup>43</sup> It is at this time, too, that the county Bridewell was enlarged and improved and, as a result, the tendency was to send the prisoners to the Bridewell rather than to the Gaol, especially as by the end of the eighteenth century it employed

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<sup>41</sup> Kemp, T., *A History of Warwick and its People*, Warwick, 1905, p.76.

<sup>42</sup> Styles, P., ‘The Development of County Administration in Warwickshire in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries’, Paper given to the Dugdale Society, 1933, WCRO, C352, pp.17-21.

<sup>43</sup> From 1810, we find that the licensing of Friendly Societies occupies an increasing space in the Quarter Sessions Minutes Book, WCRO, CR39.

the inmates in a thriving manufactory of carpets, blankets, rugs, tammies, etc.<sup>44</sup> The problem of poverty in the town was so dire that, for once, the rivalry which we have encountered earlier between the various religious denominations was officially buried. The *Warwick Advertiser* of December 21 1816 displayed the following announcement:

Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor. At a meeting of the Inhabitants of this Borough held at the Court-House...it was resolved unanimously that the necessitous state of the Poor in this Borough, arising principally from the want of employment, requires the immediate attention of the humane and benevolent. [The fund raised] will be under the control of the Mayor and Corporation, the Members, the Clergy including the officiating Ministers of the several Dissenting and Catholic Congregations, and subscribers of two guineas and upwards...

Thus, with the new requirements of a developing administration, the county towns entered the era of the professional writers, the attorneys, the clerks and other civic employees who replaced the scribes of old. *The Universal British Directory* lists six attorneys and two clerks in Warwick of the 1790s, while in the 1820s, the *Pigot's Directory* lists 15 attorneys and twelve clerks and other civic employees.

The political life of Warwick was, to some extent, a reflection of the religious make-up of the town, and it could not but be affected by what was happening in the rest of the country, especially in Birmingham: the dissenters' national campaign for constitutional reform, the French Revolution and its aftermath, and the new Tax Bill, all perturbed the normally quiet waters of the town. William Field remarked that, in the early 1790s, because of the "astonishing event" of the French Revolution, "the hopes and the fears of the friends and the enemies of popular freedom were equally and

<sup>44</sup> A magistrate called to give evidence before a Select Committee on the State of Children employed in Manufactories' in 1816, states that he has four daughters and "if I was put to the choice either to send them to this cotton mill [in Warwick], for seven years, or to Warwick Bridewell, I would prefer the latter". Taken from Lane, J., *Warwickshire: Local History Sources*, Leamington Spa, 1988, p.8.

intensely excited, [and that] the High Tories both in Church and State supported by a powerful administration, assumed a terrific aspect."<sup>45</sup> In response to local fears, a meeting on an anti-reform platform was organised in Warwick in February 1790, and attended by noblemen, gentry, and clergy. A Warwickshire Constitutional Society was created in Birmingham in 1791 by the Unitarian Joseph Priestley.<sup>46</sup> He printed thousands of prospectuses to advertise it, and some must surely have found their way to Warwick, at least amongst the Dissenting and liberal community, through the channel of William Field. (The wife of William Smith, MP, touring the country with her husband in 1792, noted in her diary that they went to hear a Mr Field's sermon and added that "he seems to be a warm friend of liberty both in religion and in politics, so that he and Mr S. agreed *à merveille*."<sup>47</sup>) The two most vocal partisans of Constitutional Reform and sympathisers of the French Revolution were, yet again, our Reverends, the Anglican Samuel Parr, and the Unitarian William Field. William Field acted as the Joseph Priestley of Warwick, and his long epitaph in the Unitarian Chapel emphasizes this political role:

... As a citizen, he strove always to spread knowledge and liberty. His activity was unwearied, his courage indomitable, he ever dared to speak the whole truth amid bitter odium. He founded the first Sunday School in this town: and nearly unaided, and at great personal risk, he maintained it during the Birmingham riots against a virulence of opposition now inconceivable...<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Field, *Memoirs...*, pp.304-305.

<sup>46</sup> *VCH*, 7, p.280.

<sup>47</sup> Papers of William Smith MP, Cambridge University Library, Add 7621. I would like to thank Dr D.L. Wykes of the University of Leicester for this reference.

<sup>48</sup> His intense interest in politics was confirmed by his son Algernon in his *Reminiscences of Early Life*, printed in 1901 in Leamington for the benefit of his children and grandchildren, a copy of which was kindly given to me by his descendants. Algernon writes "My father was so warm a politician that, when anything special was going on in the world, he could not rest without seeing the evening papers".

Indeed, these Birmingham riots of 1791 led by a King and Country mob to quash the town's Radicalism had their repercussions in Warwick where, although there was no burning of libraries or ransacking of property as happened in Birmingham, Dr Parr was harassed because of his support for the Dissenters, "his house marked for conflagration, his books threatened with destruction", and "songs, satires, anonymous letters, caricatures, prints, allegorical medals, paragraphs in newspapers, toasts and speeches" were directed against those who were seen by the King and Country camp as dangerous revolutionaries and traitors.<sup>49</sup>

In 1797, the Mayor was asked to convene a Public Meeting on the subject of the new Tax Bill. The resolutions which were proposed protested against the "glaringly unequal" taxes deemed to be "extremely burdensome to the middle and inferior classes", and this contribution to be "scandalously favourable to the most opulent members of the community." The Earl of Warwick interrupted the meeting to protest haughtily that the inhabitants couldn't possibly understand what was involved, and immediately circulated a Protest in the form of a tract which was distributed throughout the town by his dependants.<sup>50</sup> He defeated the resolutions, but was condemned in a vitriolic letter written by William Field, published shortly after, in 1798: "We see plainly with what an *evil eye* you view even those small remains of British Freedom, which the most arbitrary measures of one of the most arbitrary administrations, that ever ruled in the country has *yet* spared." The behaviour of Lord Brooke on this occasion tilted the balance in favour of the Independents and the Reformists, and the influence of Field certainly contributed to the vote *en masse* of the Unitarians for the party of Reform in the subsequent elections. It is from this time that the remarkable absence of political cleavage between Church and Dissent in Warwick came to an end.<sup>51</sup> Later, the Radical circle, which comprised businessmen and manufacturers

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for which they had to row all the way from Leamington to Warwick! (p.18).

<sup>49</sup> Field, *Memoirs*..., pp.304-309. Langford, J.A., *A Century of Birmingham Life 1741-1841*, 2 vols., Birmingham, 1868, reminds us of the enormous violence of the riots: see vol.1, pp.472-499.

<sup>50</sup> for this and the following, see Field, *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Warwick ...*

who were not all Dissenters, campaigned against the increased tendency to arbitrary rule which prevailed after Waterloo. Again, when the tax levied to finance the army during the wars was being maintained when peace returned, a Public Meeting was organised in the Court-House on 18 February 1815, and a petition for the repeal of an “unconstitutional and unjust” tax was proposed and, this time, endorsed unanimously.<sup>52</sup> The landed gentry joined in the protest, and this prompted Sam Parr, who saw through the ‘radicalism’ of the gentry, to write to Joseph Parkes: “I should certainly insist far more conspicuously and more energetically, on the dangers of our large military establishments, than on the mischief of the property tax.”<sup>53</sup> Another Public Meeting was organised on 8 June 1817 to protest against the renewal of the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. This was a County Meeting and had the vigorous support of the Birmingham radicals, especially as their own gatherings were becoming harder to organise; the Hampden Club, for instance, was forced to suspend its meetings altogether. So 200 or 300 of them sailed to Warwick down the Birmingham Canal on a flotilla of small boats in order to attend the meeting, as if to a *partie-de-campagne*.<sup>54</sup> Genteel Warwick somehow seemed to dull the edge of Protest.

Were Warwick Whigs and ‘Jacobins’, Dissenters and liberal Anglicans, also prominent in the cultural life of the town? There already existed a well established culture of the county gentry also supported by the nobility: the County Races, sponsored from the early eighteenth century by the Castle, and the Race Balls and the Hunt Balls. This is how local writers and by-standers described these events: “When I was a schoolboy [in the 1810s], Warwick races were the one great occasion for the meeting yearly of all the beauty and aristocracy of the county. The meeting was joined

<sup>51</sup> See Styles, ‘The Corporation of Warwick...’, pp.97-100.

<sup>52</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, February 4, 1815.

<sup>53</sup> Field, *Letter...*, *op. cit.*, p.190.

<sup>54</sup> *VCH*, 7, p.288.



also by farmers, tradesmen, and idlers...A ball at the Warwick Arms Hotel in the evening of one of the race days was the principal county Ball of the year"; and in her novel *Constance*, the local teacher Kate Thomson, emulating Jane Austen, gives us a more literary and critical account of the balls, as she saw them in the 1780s or 1790s: "the race-ball of a county town was then, as it is now, frequently held in the county hall...The high-born and the fashionable here enjoyed the full privileges of their distinction, their descent, property, and station, being here more thoroughly known than in the democratic haunts of contaminating London. A strong line of demarcation was drawn between the denizens of the town and the freeholders of the country..."<sup>55</sup> While the balls were an exclusive and mostly gentrified affair, the races and the theatre were also plebeian entertainments. The bills posted around the town for the period between 1799 and 1804 advertised a remarkably varied mixture of entertainments for all tastes, much as television offers us today: classics like Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies, topical plays like the "two very interesting plays written upon the recent melancholy Events, the Deaths of the King and Queen of France, stiled *Louis the Unfortunate* and *The Maid of Normandy* are both in preparation", or "A Farce *The Turnpike Gate or Who Pays the Toll?*", or "A Grand Drama *The Castle Spectre*", interspersed with comic songs, "loyal songs", and other patriotic offerings like *The Invasion or a Fig for Bonyparte and his gun boats*. To this bill of delights were added some extravaganza like Mr Richer's "Elegant and surprising exhibitions on the Tight Rope", optical fireworks, processions of young virgins "By Young Ladies of the Town" (as a bonus to *Romeo and Juliet*), exhibitions of transparent paintings of Hamlet or the royal family, phantasmagoria, etc.<sup>56</sup>

Such entertainment, in good eighteenth-century style of urban culture, was to a certain extent classless, although it was also completely separate from the 'high culture'

<sup>55</sup> Field, A., *Reminiscences*...., p.14; Thomson, Kate, *Constance*, London, 1830, vol.1, pp.145-147.

<sup>56</sup> WCRO, MI 284, Theatre posters, Warwick.

restricted to the network of country houses, private collections, and ‘grand tours’. The latter did not impinge on the town culture which offered, in addition to the races and the theatre, fairs and taverns where varied entertainments were to be found which reflected the interest of the period in the bizarre and the unnatural: stone eaters, dwarves, giants, learned dogs, automatons, and even fairies.<sup>57</sup>

In this context, what was the place of writing in the town? The propertied classes and especially the landed gentry were the greatest generators of written material: they had the means to use good paper and writing implements, the leisure to write, and the proud motivation to keep their family papers for posterity. For instance, the family archives of the Newdigates of Arbury and of the Earls at Warwick are considerable. The diaries of Roger Newdigate occupy fifty-six yearly volumes, and those of Frances Newdigate cover a period of thirty-five years; and to these must be added a vast correspondence of a personal and public nature: notebooks, common-place books, gardening diaries, accounts of the Grand Tours to France and Italy, public notes to do with the poor, numerous notes on sermons and Parliamentary Debates, poems and reminiscences. All these writings by-passed the town: they again were part of the ‘Castle culture’ and remained behind mansion walls. But the propertied classes also generated a considerable writing activity in the town; there was a sizeable body of solicitors to deal with their affairs — estate and property management, deeds, leases, accounts, lists, reports, letter books — as well as with the county administration in which they were often also involved. So the town was full of ‘professional’ writers: solicitors, lawyers, justices and their clerks, the Borough Treasurer (whose post was held by the Greenway family for more than sixty years, an undemocratic situation but one which made for continuity), the Clerk of the Peace and his deputy clerks, etc. For the town, we have the recordings of the Borough and Quarter Sessions, the vestry

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<sup>57</sup> Recorded by Langford, J.A., in *A Century of Birmingham Life 1741-1841*, 2 vols. Birmingham, 1868, pp.389, 393, 401; by Bisset (see Chap.5), and even by Bertie Greatheed, fed on the classics and a collector of paintings, who takes his grand-daughter to see the dwarf at Warwick’s Whitsuntide fair (WCRO, CR 1707/122, Diaries, May 12 1818).

books, the minutes of meetings, the registers, and, in solicitors boxes, the private papers of citizens, tradesmen's receipt books and accounts, bills, wills, letters, and so on.

There were, however, other uses of writing, emanating from those who could be described as the 'intellectuals' of the town who, not surprisingly, were yet again from the same circle of Dissenters and liberals whom we have already encountered. In fact, if the central figure of this circle of literati was Dr Parr, whose eccentric and controversial character looms large in their writings,<sup>58</sup> their catalyst, as it were, was the Parkes family. Like the Caussemilles in Draguignan, the Parkes had long been established in the town and, like them also, they moved from being drapers and small bankers to manufacturing. They were friends, confidants, correspondents, and financial advisers to Dr Parr and Bertie Greatheed; they were pillars of the Reverend Field's Unitarian Chapel; and, with the latter, they were his staunch supporters. They were also amongst the entrepreneurial group who developed Leamington: the physicians Dr Taylor and Dr Lambe; solicitors like John Parry, described by William Field as a "Whig of ardent spirit"; and John Tomes, banker and MP, who fought for the political freedom of the town, in opposition to Sir Charles Greville of the Castle. Some of them wrote in the old style of the people of leisure and education; for example Bertie Greatheed of Guy's Cliffe Manor wrote extensive diaries, a tragedy, *The Regent*, for the famous Mrs Siddons who had lived with the family before becoming an actress. He also made translations from the classics, and he wrote or contributed to two "much attacked" volumes of poems, according to his good friends the Berry sisters.<sup>59</sup> William Field and Dr Parr also wrote letters, pamphlets, and sermons, some of which were printed.

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<sup>58</sup> In Field's *Memoirs* of him, in Kate Thomson's *Constance*, in Bertie Greatheed diaries (WCRO), in Phoebe Parkes' Commonplace book (WCRO), and in James Bisset's *Reminiscences* (WCRO).

<sup>59</sup> *The Berry Papers*, London, 1914, p.289 (first published as *Journals and Correspondance of Mary Berry 1783-1853*, London, 1866).

But our authors turned to different pursuits because of, on the one hand, the suppression of radicalism branded as anti-patriotic while the French wars lasted, and, on the other, the rise of a ‘middle class’ culture. Instead of writing to express ideas and strongly held beliefs, they began to write for money — times were hard — and for the consumers of leisure. For instance, Jeremiah Joyce, a Unitarian Reverend and tutor to Lord Stanhope’s sons, who was an active correspondent of the Society for Constitutional Information and the London Corresponding Society, and who after serving a two year sentence in 1794-95 for ‘treasonable practices’, turned to writing school books on science, and contributed to a *Dictionary on Art and Science* and Nicholson’s *British Encyclopaedia*. Another example is Lindley Murray, an American Quaker who exiled himself to England and wrote Grammars and Readers in the 1790s and early 1800s. They became best-selling books in both England and the United States.<sup>60</sup> The Reverend Field, in Warwick, also turned to the educational market,<sup>61</sup> and he catered for the developing tourist industry with his 1815 guide to Warwick, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town and Castle of Warwick and the Neighbouring Spa of Leamington*. He even indulged in a more frivolous and bizarre enterprise by agreeing to write down, under the dictation of Ann Brookhouse, the narrative — directly inspired by Richardson’s *Pamela* — of her seizure and confinement by a gentleman when she was in service in London.<sup>62</sup> It was indeed a

<sup>60</sup> Austin, F., ‘Lindley Murray: the English textbooks’, *Paradigm*, 19 (1996), pp.1-26. English sales of his textbooks apparently reached about three millions.

<sup>61</sup> For example, his *Introduction to the Use of the Globes*, which had two editions, printed in Warwick in 1799 and 1801.

<sup>62</sup> *A Narrative of the Seizure and Confinement of Ann Brookhouse who was assaulted in one of the streets of London and carried off by two hired ruffians, May 7, 1798, and detained in close Imprisonment till August 25 following, as related by herself — written by a Friend*, London, 1799, described on the title page as being “written in Warwick December 11, 1798”, WCRO, C364 Bro (P). A hand-written note on the booklet says: “The whole of this narrative is entirely false, her own relatives were convinced of the falsity of it.”

time for provincial women writers. Parr admired women for “the excellence which some have displayed in the elegant accomplishments of painting, music and poetry, in the nice discrimination of biography, in the broader researches of history and in moral compositions.”<sup>63</sup> He too, like Samuel Richardson, had a number of protégées whose education and writings he encouraged: of these, some of the eight Byerley sisters were the most successful.<sup>64</sup> They were the great nieces of Josiah Wedgwood, who helped finance the excellent education they received. The oldest sister Frances, who married one of the Parkes’ sons, published under the name of Mrs William Parkes a successful book which emphasized the importance of reading and study, and which probably had had the approval of Parr himself: *Domestic Duties or Instructions to young married Ladies* published in London in 1825. In her ‘Advertisement’, she apologised for having had to write “these sheets”, but that she was led “by circumstances rather than by choice to assume that character [of an author]”, thus distancing herself from what Harriet Guest calls “the immodesty of display...veiled by purposive industry of financial self-aggrandisement.”<sup>65</sup> Katherine Thomson, whom we have already mentioned, was one of the youngest of the Byerley sisters; she described Parr in irreverential terms in *Constance*, her three-decker novel set in Warwick disguised under the name of Newberry. This had much success, according to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of March 1834, which criticised her for providing “every circulating library in England” such unveiled portraits of her contemporaries.<sup>66</sup> Another woman, Sarah Medley wrote in 1813 one of the very first guides to Leamington; it was a sort of poetical account of the incipient spa, together with testimonies of the “Well Authenticated Cures” procured by its waters. In it, she hailed the arrival of James Bisset because “by him your tasteful pleasures are combined” in this place where, she

<sup>63</sup> Field, *Memoirs...* vol 2, p.159.

<sup>64</sup> Most of the biographical details about them are in P. D. Hicks, *A Quest of Ladies, the Story of a Warwickshire School*, Birmingham, 1949.

<sup>65</sup> Guest, H., ‘A double lustre, femininity and sociable commerce 1730-1760’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 4, (1990), 479-501.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted by Hicks, *A Quest...*, p.100.

added, “we find the friends of intellect and liberal mind.”<sup>67</sup> The tasteful pleasures she advertised were Bisset’s Museum and Picture Gallery, and the Botanical Gardens, still in their infancy but already named rather grandiosely “Ranelagh Gardens.” These Ranelagh Gardens “exhibit specimens of taste and public spirit” according to Bisset’s *Descriptive Guide of Leamington Priors* of 1814, and became “the Vauxhall of Leamington” in Moncrieff’s *Guide* of 1818. Thus the new culture promoted by the ‘middle class’ in search of distinction was created locally through these writings, which illustrate the new taste for public spaces and for science. Roy Porter says that physicians and Unitarians were crucial in spreading polite “ornamental” scientific culture.<sup>68</sup> We have exactly that here, with the Warwick physicians writing about the waters and their properties, and the Unitarians following the lead given by Erasmus Darwin for Birmingham, with an interest in natural science, especially botany. But it was also the Unitarians who introduced the modern useful, as opposed to ornamental, engineering by installing Boulton and Watt steam engines, in Warwick in the Parkes’ worsted factory, and in Leamington to pump the water into the baths, and it was young Josiah Parkes who invented the deep drainage system.<sup>69</sup>

In the 1820s, however, there was a reappearance of ‘middle class’ political writings, following on the reappearance, after 1815, of a ‘middle class’ political language, as described by Dror Wahrman.<sup>70</sup> It was then that the Reverend Field published his *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend Samuel Parr*, essentially a paean to the radical 1790s; it was then also that Joseph Parkes, son of the Warwick manufacturers, became a known figure of radical Birmingham, and wrote his pamphlet *The Governing Charter of the Borough of Warwick*, in which he reminded the town’s

<sup>67</sup> Medley, Sarah, *The Beauties of Leam Priors*, Coventry, 1813, p.13.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Science, provincial culture and public opinion in Enlightenment England’ in Borsay, P., *The Eighteenth-Century Town, 1698-1820*, London, 1990, pp.243-267.

<sup>69</sup> VCH, 8, p.513.

<sup>70</sup> Wahrman, D., *Imagining the Middle Class*, Cambridge, 1995.

citizens of their rights. We shall return to these ups and downs in the political voice of the 'middle class' with another of our local protagonists, James Bisset, artist, writer and cultural entrepreneur in Leamington.<sup>71</sup> In *Constance*, again, Katherine Thomson described the society of Newberry (Warwick) in terms of a burgeoning difference of cultures:

The society at Newberry, at this period [the 1780s-1790s] differed in no respect from that of most country towns...saving that it was more genteel... The younger branches of aristocratic families, retired clergymen, and physicians without practice, of whom its inhabitants were partly composed, looked with contempt upon the commercial portion of their fellow-townsmen, who had, however, the superiority of wealth, and perhaps intelligence, over their haughty neighbours...They had no public spirit; no desire for improvement; no taste for innovation; and were mostly of an age to prefer the card-assembly to the dancing-room.<sup>72</sup>

Here, Mrs Thomson, through her heroine, expressed the voice of some of her elders or contemporaries, amongst them many women:<sup>73</sup> that public spirit, desire for improvement, and taste for innovation were the preserve of what she called "the commercial portion of the population", of the 'middle class' which was considering itself to be "the repository of intelligence" and to be "[associated with social change, and in particular with the growth of industry]."<sup>74</sup> This is how Dror Wahrman describes the similarities in middle class political language of the early nineteenth century in both France and Britain, and so it is time now that we turn our attention to our French county town in Provence.

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<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>72</sup> *Constance*, A Novel, 3 vols., London, 1830, vol. 1, pp.31-32. There is no author's name on the cover (no feminine display even then!), but the 1847 Catalogue of Warwick Library lists it under its title followed by the name of the author, Mrs Thomson, between brackets.

<sup>73</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>74</sup> Wahrman, *Imagining...*, p.289.



## Draguignan.

The town is built around a big rock surmounted by an old tower, the remainder of an ancient fortress; big bulging towers guard each one of the town's gates; an esplanade where people play bowls follows the line of the town's walls; its numerous fountains and squares make the sojourn in Draguignan most gracious; and its meadows, mills and gardens combine usefulness with pleasure, as do its well-aligned streets and its elegantly built houses. There are vast unoccupied spaces—the old convents, now national property.

*Lettres Provençales* Draguignan, 1802.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Anonymous, printed by Latil, Draguignan 1880, p.17, (Bibliothèque Municipale de Draguignan).

This anonymous traveller had surely read, and probably had with him, an earlier guide. Michel Achard's *Description historique, géographique et topographique des villes de Provence* published in Aix in 1787, which says of Draguignan: "The fountains and public squares which embellish the Town... render the stay in Draguignan most gracious. There meadows, gardens, and mills add usefulness to pleasure. Streets are well aligned and houses built with elegance." Except that this traveller is a doctor too, and he adds: "the climate is temperate, the air is pure and the average life of its inhabitants is 28 years."



Draguignan stands centrally at the watershed between Haute-Provence and Basse-Provence. In the late 1780s, it was a walled town with five gates and a population of around 6000 inhabitants (therefore slightly more than Warwick), situated in the plain of the river Nartuby, surrounded by hills covered with woods or planted with olive trees and vines.<sup>76</sup> It was, and had been since 1535, the seat of the *Sénéchaussée*, the criminal and civil jurisdiction for the central part of Basse-Provence. Its gaol was therefore used only for short sentences, since those who were not whipped publicly or cautioned were sent to Toulon's convict prison. From 1790, it found itself in a new county, the *Département du Var*, an administrative unit created in 1790 by the *Assemblée Nationale* of the Revolution. At that time it was not yet the *chef-lieu* or county town of the Var but, in 1797, Draguignan took over this role from Toulon — no doubt as a punishment for Toulon's bad behaviour when, in 1793, it sided with the English under the impulse of the *fédérés*, themselves led by a group of staunch royalists.<sup>77</sup> The new administrative organisation divided the old province of Provence into three, then four *départements*: the Basses-Alpes, the Bouches-du-Rhône, the Var, and the Vaucluse. Despite its small size, and just like Warwick, it had an important role: it was the third town of the Var, after Toulon with 30,000 inhabitants, and Grasse with 12,000.

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<sup>76</sup> Most of the general information for this chapter comes from Margueritte, M., 'Draguignan à la fin de l'Ancien Régime', *Bulletin de la Société d'études scientifiques et archéologiques de Draguignan et du Var*, 32 (1987), pp.103-112; Margueritte, M., 'Draguignan An I de la Liberté', *Bulletin de la Société d'études scientifiques et archéologiques de Draguignan et du Var*, 34 (1989-90), pp.1-11; *Statistique Générale de la France — Statistique du Var*, (Fauchet,) Paris, 1805; Noyon, N., *Statistique du Var*, Draguignan, 1838; and Derlange, M., 'Draguignan à la fin de l'Ancien Régime. Etude de société d'une cité provinciale', *Annales de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Nice*, 45 (1983), pp.129-141.

<sup>77</sup> A decree of the *Convention Nationale*, which was published in all the *Départements*, suppressed Toulon's "infamous name", and changed it to 'Port de la Montagne'; the same decree ordered the celebration of the recapture of the town in the whole of the Republic, (Decree No 1985, 4 Nivôse, Year 2).

Draguignan's population had been spared by the plague of 1720 which raged throughout Provence, and it was growing slowly and steadily, at a somewhat similar pace to Warwick. But its inhabitants were more directly bound to the land than their English counterparts. The *Cahiers de Doléances* for Draguignan district emphasises the town's symbiosis with the land and requests "that agriculture, mother provider of the State, principle of trade and source of real property, be protected, favoured, and honoured."<sup>78</sup> The *ménagers*, farmers who owned the land they cultivated, had 40 per cent of the land; some were quite rich but many were poor. Most of them lived just outside the town, while the *travailleurs* or agricultural labourers mostly lived in the town, although they too might have a plot of poor land for their subsistence. The artisans, shopkeepers, and bourgeois of the town themselves owned as much as 50 per cent of the land, often with some form of dwelling where they would spend Sundays and feast days. Finally, the privileged classes, the nobles and especially the clergy, owned the remaining 10 per cent — very different from Warwick, where the nobility owned vast areas of the surrounding land. Actually, this ownership pattern of the land was peculiar to Draguignan for, in the rest of Provence, the average ownership was 50, 25, and 25 per cent respectively for peasants, middling classes, and nobles and clergy. The Revolution brought an even greater proportion of the land into the hands of the town population, who bought some of the best land that had belonged to the clergy, but which then became part of the *Biens Nationaux*, national property.

Those who lived on or off the land represented some 48 per cent of the population, of which one third were the *ménagers*, and two thirds the *travailleurs*; and whether they owned land or not, the *travailleurs* had other activities in the town to make ends meet. The artisans and shopkeepers, 28 per cent of the population, often grouped in *confréries* or guilds, had their land in the form of a garden in the town, an olive grove, a fruit or mulberry orchard, or a vineyard outside the town. They were usually literate

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<sup>78</sup> *Cahier Général des doléances du Tiers-Etat de la Sénéchaussée de Draguignan*, Aix, 1789, article 47, in Mireur, F., *Etats Généraux de 1789*, Draguignan, 1889.

and, as in Warwick, the highest level of literacy was to be found amongst tanners, drapers, and traders and manufacturers<sup>79</sup> like the Caussemilles. Their trades served the usual needs of a town, as well as more distant markets in the county. The bourgeoisie was important in Draguignan, 22 per cent of the population, of which roughly two thirds were professionals or men or women of property, and one third were traders, manufacturers, or both. This group was intimately bound to their rural life, and they also possessed some of the best arable land. The nobility of Draguignan, as in the rest of Provence, was in decline by the end of the eighteenth century, and so was its ownership of the land. They frequently served in the King's army or navy, and therefore were often posted far away; by contrast, Toulon, an important naval town, had a very high proportion of nobility from other areas, 9 per cent of its population. Those nobility who remained in Draguignan, only 1 per cent of the population, were likely to have positions in the administration and judiciary. There were still a few big families in the Draguignan area, for example the Vingtimille, the d'Ampus, and the de la Motte, assassinated during the Terreur.

The population of servants was large, as even the artisans had one servant, usually a woman. Although Michel Margueritte puts this at 2 per cent of the population, the figure was probably higher: domestic servants in noble households, for instance, appeared, if at all, on a separate tax roll, special to the nobility. As usual, there are no statistics for the paupers, a floating population which followed the vagaries of the price of wheat and the ups and downs of the economy of the town. There was a workhouse for those without lodgings, run by nuns but subsidised by the town; it was a combination of hospital, asylum, orphanage, as well as workhouse. Widows and their children were supported by the town, each child receiving the same sum until aged seven. The municipality looked after abandoned children — there were many — until they were 16 and fit for a job.

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<sup>79</sup> Duby, *Histoire ....*, p.269.

The clergy formed an important little group in a town which had an old religious tradition. Like Warwick, it had a Collegiate church run by *chanoines*, or deans, and twelve secular priests; even the Bishop of the Var, whose official palace was in Fréjus, usually chose to reside in Draguignan where the air was more salubrious. There were many convents but they were half empty by the late 1780s, and when the Revolution closed them, it was only accelerating a process of dying. Added to that, during the Revolution, Bishop Jean-Joseph Rigouard, a ‘red bishop’, swore the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and preached against refractory priests,<sup>80</sup> although there were not many in the Var where an astounding 90 per cent also swore the oath. In January 1815, the government of Louis XVIII asked for a report on the state of the *esprit public* in the *départements*. In response, *préfet* Bouthillier expressed his concern at the lack of religion and morality, and at the severe lack of priests in the Var: only the “enlightened piety of the King”, according to him, could “remedy the dire consequences of our Revolution.”<sup>81</sup> Yet, at the beginning of our period, Draguignan still had four *confréries de pénitents*,<sup>82</sup> religious confraternities; these were mainly a Provençal institution and part of the region’s *piété baroque*, but they had become more social, even folkloric, rather than religious, and more so when they reappeared after the Revolution. The fact that, during the revolutionary period, some of the successors to the *confréries* became quite naturally the *Sociétés Populaires*, often with the same people meeting in the same locales, shows how secular the confraternities had become. If, however, Provence’s Catholicism was baroque, it was also Jansenist.<sup>83</sup> In fact there was a long established opposition to the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Provence, as Timothy Tackett has demonstrated impressively, partly because of the presence of

<sup>80</sup> Archives Départementales du Var (ADV), *Clergé catholique*, 1L1087.

<sup>81</sup> Archives Nationales (AN), F1 C III, Var, 7.

<sup>82</sup> These are well described in Agulhon, M., *Pénitents et Francs-Maçons de l'ancienne Provence*, Paris, 1968, and Vovelle, M., *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, 1973.

<sup>83</sup> Vovelle, *Piété baroque....*, esp. pp.458-477.

Jansenism, but principally because the ordinary priests in the south were underpaid: under the regime of the *portion congrue*, they received a very poor salary of 700 livres, increased to 1200 during the Revolution.<sup>84</sup> So there was a much greater religious uniformity than in Warwick, and if dichotomy there was, it was between very different ‘conformists’ and ‘non-conformists’, although, paradoxically, the ‘non-conformists’ were the Draguignan women who tried to keep their churches and priests, opposing the men whom they saw as dangerous *déchristianisateurs*. In October 1792, for instance, there were *contre-révolutionnaires* troubles in Draguignan where women were prominent; a group of them invaded the College still run by *Doctrinaires* Brothers and one woman shouted abuse at the priest there, calling him ‘thief’ and ‘Jansenist’, and threatening him with death if he did not give up his constitutional oath.<sup>85</sup> This process of female commitment to the church and male rejection of it, which had started before the Revolution, was accelerated then by women’s fight against the oath and the civil constitution of the clergy, and led to what Tackett described as “a battle of the sexes.”<sup>86</sup> A circular letter from the Draguignan *Société Populaire* to its agents in the districts invited them to put an end to the women’s ‘fanaticism’, since these ‘so-called devouts’ were a threat to the public interest; therefore the agents had the task of preaching civic virtues to these women still ‘steeped in ignorance’.<sup>87</sup> We shall dwell later on the effects on the culture of the written word of this gender dichotomy in the religious domain.

The religious situation in Draguignan did not have as direct an effect on the changes in the urban economy as it had in Warwick; but it did so indirectly, because the sale of *biens nationaux*, which within the town were mostly made up of church property,

<sup>84</sup> Tackett, T., *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France*, Princeton, 1986, p.155, and *passim*.

<sup>85</sup> ADV, L270, Administration and Police for Draguignan’s district.

<sup>86</sup> Tackett, *Religion...*, p.175; and see also Hufton, O., ‘The reconstruction of a church 1796-1801’, in Lewis, G. & Lucas C., eds., *Beyond the Terror*, Cambridge, 1983, pp.21-52.

<sup>87</sup> ADV, 1L 2004, *Correspondance du Comité de Surveillance de Draguignan*.

allowed the commercial people to enlarge their premises and turn from trading to manufacturing. This is what the Caussemilles did in Draguignan, as the Parkes had done a few years before in Warwick. The close link between the town and the land, which we have already mentioned, was accentuated by the heavy taxation put on agricultural products: the municipal tax (1/16 of the production), the 1/16 *dîme* or tithe, paid to the clergy, the milling tax, the *censalage* or salt tax, and finally the toll tax for fruit, vegetables, fish, and meat. (The nobility and clergy were exempted from these taxes, of course, but they did pay taxes on their estates). So Draguignan lived mostly off the land, either directly, or indirectly through taxation. It produced olive oil, wine and spirits, vinegar, fruit and vegetables, pulses, soap, silk from local silk worms, pottery from local clay, and wood. The trading of these riches took place at the twice weekly markets and at the fairs, of which there were four a year.

One essential product the area was short of was wheat, and this scarcity looms large in the life of the town.<sup>88</sup> Wheat was sold on Draguignan's market, and its price was central to the daily preoccupations not only of the housewife, but also of the traders, since the price of other foodstuffs was affected by it. Madame Caussemille, who was in the soap and olive oil trade, and also sold wheat, never failed to mention it in her letters to her husband when he was away doing the fairs. A poor harvest would lead to the pauperisation of an important part of the population. The price of bread in Draguignan was high, much higher than in the Paris area. Now and again, the *communauté* bought wheat at low price "as a precaution against excessive prices", for example in the winter of 1788-9, according to the minutes of the Council Meeting on 28 December. Again, after the harsh winter of 1789, the Council decided in August of that year to buy 1500 loads of wheat for the town.<sup>89</sup> It was the problem of bread, rather

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<sup>88</sup> In fact it loomed large in the life of every town, wheat being the indicator of their dependency on the country: E. de la Poix de Fréminville's *Traité de la Police générale* (Paris 1771), has pages of regulations on the sale of grains "which cannot be sold but on public markets" and which "must be the greatest and principal preoccupation of the Fiscal Procurator", (pp.355-357).

than the privileges of the nobility and clergy, which caused one of Draguignan's worst uprising in the early spring of 1789: the poor, for once, came to the Council meeting and imposed a lowering of the price of wheat. It was also at that time that the de la Mottes, husband and wife, were assassinated in their mansion. The economic crisis had been compounded by a wine surplus and the massive mortality of the olive trees during the preceding rigorous winters. There were riots, however, which took place in the country rather than the town. Michel Vovelle<sup>90</sup> points out the originality of Basse-Provence, as this early revolt, when castles were looted, spared it the *Grande Peur* of the summer 1789, the area having had its 'long hot spring'. Because of the crisis — and as in Warwick a bit later — there was thieving and footpads and highwaymen. Although their presence was reported mostly in the neighbouring county, the Council responded to mounting local fear by deciding to restore the town's gates to their primitive use, and to establish a voluntary militia.<sup>91</sup>

Later, the worst of the Terror, which affected Marseille and Toulon, by-passed Draguignan,<sup>92</sup> although there were purges masterminded by the *commissaires de la République*, and many municipal authorities were removed and replaced by others who were required to accept the posts entrusted to them; there were 14 new appointees in Draguignan, many of them artisans and *ménagers*.<sup>93</sup> It would seem that the Var

<sup>89</sup> ADV, *Délibérations du Conseil Général*, BB49 and 50.

<sup>90</sup> Vovelle, M., 'Y a-t-il eu une révolution culturelle au XVIIIe siècle? A propos de l'éducation populaire en Provence', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 22 (1975), pp.89-141.

<sup>91</sup> ADV, BB49-50, 25 August 1789. Arthur Young was sceptical about those brigands: "rumours of brigands" he chose to call them in his *Tavels in France and Italy*, London, 1790(?), reprint 1976, p.184.

<sup>92</sup> ADV, L270, *Police générale*. Only one massacre of a sire Durand and his wife by the crowds was recorded by the police which states that the *gardes nationales* and the dragoons were overwhelmed, .

<sup>93</sup> ADV, L1492, *Comité de Salut Public de Draguignan*, and ADV, AC D3, *Délibérations du Conseil général de Draguignan*, 7 floréal, Year 2: the new members had to take an oath that they would "maintain the liberty and equality, as well as the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, and fulfill

Revolutionary Tribunal, held in Grasse between December 1793 and April 1794 acquitted more than it sentenced.<sup>94</sup> It was established by the three *représentants en mission*, emissaries for the Convention, Barras, Robespierre junior, and Fréron and, although they masterminded the cleansing of the municipal council, was their relative leniency in Draguignan due to the fact that Barras was a local lad?<sup>95</sup> The Tribunal did sentence the ex-mayor Jordany for *crime de contre-Révolution*, or federalism, as well as François Caussemille, the head of the Caussemille family whom we shall meet later. Jordany was acquitted after a lengthy trial, and Caussemille died of shame in prison.<sup>96</sup> On 3 Brumaire Year 3, a report from the *Comité de Surveillance* in Draguignan confirms that there had been more releases of prisoners than sentences.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, the royalist ‘White Terror’ of 1815, which raged in the Var, did shake Draguignan. The Caussemille letters of that year reflect the anxiety of a family known for its support for Napoleon. The younger of the Caussemille brothers was sent to Lyon on business, and encouraged to stay there until things calmed down in the town.<sup>98</sup>

The bureaucratic machinery of the Revolution, enlarged by Napoleon, increased the need for services. Because Draguignan was a residential town for the gentry and the

with zeal and exactness the duties they were entrusted with, or die while defending them.”

<sup>94</sup> Poupé, E., *Le Tribunal Révolutionnaire du Var*, Draguignan, 1911.

<sup>95</sup> Barras describes his activities in the Midi as a swift and clean procedure: “I travelled through the Basses-Alpes, part of the Bouches-du -Rhône, and the Var. I pacified everywhere, dissolved without hesitation both those *Sociétés Populaires* which exaggerated the Revolution and those *assemblées sectionnaires* [federalist sections] which attacked the Republic. I dismissed civilian, military and judicial authorities; I established tribunals in the town of Grasse. This firm and just behaviour was of such good effect that as soon as my voice was heard regiments of *gardes nationales* were raised.”, *Mémoires de Barras*, Duruy, G., ed., Paris, 1895, pp.103-104.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 4 for Caussemille, and ADV, 2L130 and 2L142 for Jordany.

<sup>97</sup> ADV, IL2004, *Correspondance du Comité de Surveillance de Draguignan*.

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 4.



professions, its level of consumption and need for services had always been important. The town provided for most of its needs through its artisans and shopkeepers who, on top of the day-to-day necessities, provided a few luxury services and specialities, like hat making (as in Warwick, and no doubt due to the important professional class in both), silk stockings, pottery, glass blowing, tanning, and shoe-making. There were three cloth manufacturers, one silk manufacturer, three stocking manufacturers, one hat manufacturer, and one soap manufacturer. These were modest establishments, providing for the town, the county, and further. Monsieur Caussemille, for instance, a soap, spirits, and vinegar maker and trader, showed in his well-kept and beautifully written business diaries that he had clients as far away as Bordeaux and Burgundy.<sup>99</sup> He wrote an appreciation of each client he visited; he liked them to be honest and wealthy, and with wives with a sound business sense. He remarked on those who were Protestant, as a quality rather than a defect. The *marchand-fabricants*, or trader manufacturers, like M. Caussemille, were the link between town and country, “the entrepreneurial cogs that activated the proto-industrial machine”, as Gwynne Lewis puts it.<sup>100</sup> This complementarity of urban and rural industry was characteristic of Draguignan and, in this respect, it differed from Warwick where, as we have seen, the industry which grew there was not at that time linked with the hinterland.

Here was no industrial revolution, but small steady manufacturing.<sup>101</sup> However it did increase to a certain extent with the expansion of the internal regional and national market due to the continental blockade during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which caused the decline of the sea ports. Before 1795, for instance, Marseille was manufacturing soap for the regional and national market, but Draguignan took over after that date,<sup>102</sup> and the Caussemilles were prompt in seizing this new trade. Theirs was

<sup>99</sup> ADV, 5J1.

<sup>100</sup> Lewis, G., ‘Proto-industrialisation in France’, *Economic History Review*, 47 (1994), pp.150-164.

<sup>101</sup> ADV, 16M 1/3, *Statistique Industrielle*. The one for the years 1815 to 1824, for instance, reported that no manufactory in the Draguignan district employed more than an average of 8 to 10 workers. .

<sup>102</sup> Agulhon, *La vie sociale...*, p.297.

no short-lived manufactory: the family papers show that, in 1845, the Caussemille sons carried on in the same business started by their father forty years before, except that they had by now added silk spinning to their activities.

As the seat of the *Sénéchaussée*, and later of the departmental administration, Draguignan, like Warwick, was full of professional writers — judges, barristers, prosecutors, solicitors, bailiffs, and clerks, all of whom, until the Revolution, dealt only with the commoners; the nobles were under the jurisdiction of the *Parlement* of Aix-en-Provence, and the clergy had their own disciplinary system. Many of these professional writers were also members of the corporation and, as *Préfet* Fauchet's *Statistiques* testifies, their number grew considerably with the new revolutionary, and later imperial, administration which was there to stay.<sup>103</sup> As in Warwick, this corporation or *conseil communal* was an oligarchy. Its members were elected for a year, or rather co-opted from names drawn out of a hat by a child. There were twelve of them: the mayor and two 'consuls', three auditors, three councillors, and three police constables. They were elected from an electoral body of 24 until February 1790, when the system was democratised to a body of 1000 (500 in Warwick) and the Council increased to 28 members. The members of the district administration were, in the main, the old notables; on the 27 October 1791, for instance, there were four solicitors, three bourgeois, six lawyers, and one trader, to discuss the heavy financial burden due to organising the sale of *biens nationaux*, of which they would only receive one sixth.<sup>104</sup> The first mayor elected was François-Marie de Rasque, an aristocrat. He was now at the head of a *commune* in the Var, rather than a *communauté de Provence*, the older name for the same entity but without the connotations of solidarity and independence of the old *communauté*.

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<sup>103</sup> Fauchet, *Statistiques...*: he says that there were 34 State employees in Draguignan in 1789, and 183 in Year 9! In 1802, the author of the *Lettres Provençales* describes the "influx of functionaries residing in Draguignan bringing great liveliness and business to the town."

<sup>104</sup> ADV, L1463, *Assemblée des administrateurs du district*.

The Council meetings were open to the public, but only those who paid a certain amount of tax could vote. On the 19th October 1783, the mayor for the year was Hercule Jordany, a barrister (the one who was later arrested during the Terror), and those present were a solicitor, four potters, a soap manufacturer, an apothecary, eight *ménagers* (farmers), three ‘bourgeois’, two police constables, and a shopkeeper. They all signed their names.<sup>105</sup> The sessions were recorded in a beautiful hand by the nominated clerk who changed every year, unlike his Warwick counterparts, the dynasty of the Hunts who, as we have seen, were the pen of that town for 70 years. The opening of each session was recorded with the ritual formula:

The General Council held this day of ... in the Town Hall was called last night and this morning to the sounds of the bell and the town crier as is customary and legal by [name of the mayor].<sup>106</sup>

It remained the same until the bureaucratic and centralising days of the Empire when the sessions opened with a dull: “Today the..., the members of the municipal council meet in ordinary session and according to article 9 of the constitutional decree.”<sup>107</sup> This is quite a different style from the Warwick Borough Council’s formula, a much grander affair.<sup>108</sup>

Borough of Warwick in the County of Warwick. At the General Quarter Sessions of the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King holden at the Courthouse in and for the said Borough on Thursday in the Week next after the feast of the Epiphany [or of ‘St Michael the Archangel’, or ‘after the translation of Thomas a Beckett’, or ‘after the close of Easter’] in the twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France[!] and Ireland [or

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<sup>105</sup> In fact county towns were, as is to be expected, top of the league tables for literacy rates, see Furet, F., Ozouf, M., *Reading and Writing, Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry*, Cambridge, 1982, pp.224-225.

<sup>106</sup> ADV, BB49-50, *Délibérations*.

<sup>107</sup> ADV, D18, *Délibérations du conseil communal*.

<sup>108</sup> WCRO, CR39, Minutes Book of Quarter Sessions.

‘Great Britain and so forth’] King Defender of the faith and so forth and  
in the year of our Lord [year].

Another interesting difference lay in the way the meetings were advertised. In Warwick, at least in the 1780s, they appeared in the *Coventry Mercury*, and later in the *Warwick Advertiser*; in Draguignan, land of sociability<sup>109</sup> and oral culture, they were advertised by a bell and town crier.

The kind of business the members of the council dealt with is well summed up in the list of money orders issued at the end of each session:

- a mason, for the repair of the town fountain and the town clock
- wood provided for the community
- the maintenance of 25 orphans
- the maintenance of widows with children
- bringing up of three bastards by members of the community
- paving the town
- wages to the employees of the town: two *valets de ville* (a sort of town keeper or vigilante), four midwives, four schoolmasters, a grave-digger, two food inspectors, an officer for weights and measurements, and a forest keeper
- subsistence allowance to the family of the town carter’s family while he was in prison for debts

At the session of January 1790, the payments were very similar, and the only echoes of the Revolution were: payment to musicians for a solemn mass given in memory of a citoyenne of the town — she died at the Bastille uprising; payment for drums bought for the newly constituted *Garde Nationale*, which had its rules and regulations published in 500 copies for the citizens of the town; bread bought for the prisoners in the gaol (there seems to be no earlier such entry, probably because it had

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<sup>109</sup> Vovelle, M., *De la cave au grenier*, Québec, 1980, p.283, & Vovelle, ‘Y-a-t-il...’, p.94.

been provided before by religious orders); and finally, a payment to the bookseller and stationer for stationery and official forms,<sup>110</sup> a token of the vastly increased amount of administrative writing brought about by the Revolution and the promotion of Draguignan to county town in 1797, followed by the installation of its first *Préfet*, Monsieur Fauchet, in 1800. Fees were usually paid to Council members; they were modest, except that of the clerk, which, with the swelling of his tasks, and following many petitions, came to exceed the wages of the four schoolmasters put together. The entirely new role for the administration of the registration of births, marriages and deaths, the *état civil*, created big problems, as often small communities could not find anybody with the ability or the time to do the job. In the end they often resorted to appointing the priest to do it “in his civilian capacity”.<sup>111</sup> Throughout the 1790s, there was a great sense of urgency in the deliberations of the local and departmental administrations as they had to face the ever increasing burden of financing the war effort, which carried in its wake a formidable stream of writing. One can sense the dismay of the local authorities, in this area of traditionally oral culture, in the face of yet another list of the new laws of the Republic which had to be read and publicised. On 10 December 1792, the new district council recorded that various ‘bundles of correspondence’ to do with the war, émigré property, national guards, and private citizens needed attention. Hence their constant petitioning for more clerical help and the necessity of increasing the wages of the mail carriers.<sup>112</sup>

What the deliberations of the *conseil municipal* show, in the 1800s, is the new preoccupation with urban public spaces, the ‘spaces for gazes’ that we have encountered earlier. The revolutionary authorities had also been preoccupied by the “improvement, embellishment, and sanitation of the communes of the Republic”,<sup>113</sup> but

<sup>110</sup> ADV, BB49-50, 4/1/1788 and 11/1/1790.

<sup>111</sup> ADV, L420, *Personnel et administration générale, Etat civil*.

<sup>112</sup> ADV, L1465, L493, AC D3 and D4: all deliberations of the various administrative bodies.

<sup>113</sup> ADV, L1492, *Comité de Salut Public de Draguignan*, poster of 19 messidor year 2.

the Wars got in the way of much structural reform. On the first day of May, 1810, the council, in its 'Report on the state of the town', established that it was in the public interest to have houses well aligned along the streets, because the "pleasant topographical position of the town and its temperate climate are not enough to attract foreigners"; and the promenades and fountains must be improved, with better paving and lighting, to complement the harmonious alignment of the houses. The new *Jardin des Plantes*, and the public money devoted to it, was another topic of municipal deliberations, for the garden was seen as "an object of curiosity, important for the education and leisure of the public, as well as a limitless resource for our agriculture."<sup>114</sup> The aims here, unlike those which presided over the creation of the privately owned Ranelagh Garden in Leamington, were more official and more directly linked to the agricultural economy of the town. As in Warwick, another space for public debate and intercourse was the town's theatre. Its importance was recognised by the local authorities and it loomed large in their deliberations.<sup>115</sup> It was seen by some, however, as an instrument of dangerous counter-revolutionary propaganda to be combated by a "powerful and legal barrage", indeed the stage must only "resound with the oracles of morality, the sacred maxims of philosophy, and the great examples of virtue", as "nothing must contribute to the degradation of the Republican spirit."<sup>116</sup> One wonders if Voltaire's *Zaïre* answered these requirements when it was shown, to great applause, in 1802, at the Draguignan theatre which had "a certain reputation", according to the writer of the *Lettres Provençales*.<sup>117</sup> As in Britain, the late 1790s and the early 1800s mark a period of the return of the book and the end of the pamphlet and radical political literature, in favour of educational works and the novel. This is what Carla Hesse has described as 'the new world of the printed word', when revolutionary publishers, like Maradan for instance switched to the novel, especially the English novel.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> ADV, D18, *Délibérations...*

<sup>115</sup> ADV, BB49, *Délibérations du conseil communal*, March and October 1788 for instance.

<sup>116</sup> ADV, 1L922, An IV-An VII, *Théâtre*.

<sup>117</sup> *Lettres...*, p.56.

These public spaces were highly used in a land where the climate and the famous high sociability of the people of Provence, especially Basse-Provence, created ideal conditions: “The citizens of Draguignan are usually very sociable, they like neighbourly intercourse; every evening they are on their doorstep, in the street, where women knit or do embroidery, men play cards, and everybody gossips; altogether it gives a pleasant liveliness to the streets, unlike in Aix where doors are mercilessly shut at dusk.”<sup>119</sup> One gauge of sociability is the presence of societies, clubs, and circles, and Provence was distinguished by their considerable numbers: the South had 60 to 80 per cent of boroughs with a society, against a national average of 12 per cent.<sup>120</sup> There were ancient societies of religious obedience: Draguignan had a well-established *Confrérie du St Sacrement*, an elitist body recruited amongst the oligarchy of the town, which owned land and organised collections for charitable purposes such as the distribution of bread to the poor. They have been described as “an egalitarian if elitist association with rules of sociability”;<sup>121</sup> the four *Confréries de pénitents* were of an equally social nature. Draguignan had another closed form of association, its masonic lodge, *Le Triomphe de l’Amitié*, established in 1785, which, despite its optimistic name, had ups and downs, but never died, unlike most lodges in Provence in the early nineteenth century. Its members belonged to the artisans and middling classes, typically bakers, tanners, builders, clockmakers, and printers, though they did have one member of the nobility, Honoré Muraire, who signed the Council Minutes either as mayor or clerk. Apart from rituals, the members were interested in philanthropy, philosophy, and

<sup>118</sup> Hesse, C., *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991, pp.181-204.

<sup>119</sup> *Lettres...*, p.19.

<sup>120</sup> Vovelle, M., ‘Midi Rouge et Midi Blanc’, *Provence Historique*, 36 (1987), p.340.

<sup>121</sup> Froeschlé-Choppard, M.H., ‘La Confrérie du Saint-Sacrement de Draguignan au 18e siècle’, *Bulletin de la Société d’Etudes Scientifiques et Archéologiques de Draguignan et du Var*, 34 (1989-90) pp.27-34.

education, but they did not touch politics: “Provençal freemasonry is cautious.”<sup>122</sup> For a period at least, we witness in France the reverse of what was happening to English associative life, which moved from loose and open forms to more formal and secretive ones.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, the religious confraternities disappeared during the Revolution, albeit slowly in places, and they were easily replaced by the *Sociétés Populaires*, created as a vehicle for the political acculturation of the citizens; these were characterised by their openness, their ‘media’ approach, and their constant epistolary contact with other associations and with the capital.<sup>124</sup> There were 161 in the Var, one of the highest figures after the Paris area.<sup>125</sup> In Draguignan and district there were 29, and these had spread in the whole of the Var by 1790 to give support to the interests of the government of the Revolution. Their distribution coincided with the *Ancien Régime* forms of sociability, but a sociability which was new in content. Indeed, these societies contributed to the creation of a new political culture, forging the political language which, as we saw earlier, gave a political definition to the middle class in both France and Britain, but earlier in France.<sup>126</sup> Their activities were varied and numerous: they encouraged people to pay their taxes and to contribute to the financing of the *Garde Nationale*; they had committees dealing with education; they rounded up deserters; they

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<sup>122</sup> Hivert-Messeca, Y., ‘Misère, espérances et mutation de la franc-maçonnerie sous la Restauration; l’exemple varois’, *Annales du Midi*, 209 (1995), pp.79-89.

<sup>123</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>124</sup> Agulhon, *Pénitents...*, pp.269-303; Julia, D., *Les trois couleurs du tableau noir*, Paris, 1981, p.11; a poster of the *Comité de Salut Public* in the Year 2 encouraged popular societies to hold public meetings as “they are the forges where public opinion is created”, ADV, 1L2053. Another *Comité de Salut Public* poster thanked the popular societies for their offerings not only of gold but of books and poems also, *ditto*.

<sup>125</sup> Boutier, J. & Boutry, P., *Atlas de la Révolution française*, 6, *Les sociétés politiques en France 1789-An III*, Paris, 1992, pp.12 & 59-61.

<sup>126</sup> Agulhon, *Pénitents ...*, p.279; Plongeron, B., ‘Sociabilité religieuse et acculturation révolutionnaire’, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 306 (1996), pp.593-600; also Wahrman, *Imagining ...*, pp.296-97.



supported and visited military hospitals; they saw that the inhabitants had adequate supplies of wheat, and that the price of meat and transport were kept low, etc.<sup>127</sup> Until 1791, these societies' recruitment was among the elites of the bourgeoisie, and only continued the earlier model of democratic sociability of the masonic lodges, clubs, and confraternities. But in 1791, their composition changed: 'passive' citizens began to join in, at least in the towns.<sup>128</sup>

The society *Les Amis de la Constitution*, for instance, founded in Marseille in 1790, developed an extensive network in the whole of France — there were 500 by mid 1791, of which 18 were in the Var. Such societies corresponded, had rules, read newspapers, pamphlets, bills, and notices at their meetings, and thus created a fertile reading-ground. The members came mostly from the middling classes, although information was often given in the Provençal dialect.<sup>129</sup> These societies changed into *Sociétés Populaires* in the 1790s and became open to the public. Ironically, in the early 1790s, when the Warwick radicals were publishing their virulent political pamphlets and letters, the correspondence of the Draguignan *Comité de Surveillance* exhibited a much more benign and polite style, albeit with an underlying sense of urgency. There are exhortations to “the humane sentiments that should be shared by all sensitive souls”, “to maintain love of concorde and harmony”, and “to engrave in people's hearts love for their neighbours”; a member of the local *Société Populaire* was politely told that it is not “proper” to write mocking songs about private persons.<sup>130</sup>

Under Napoleon, societies which had been disbanded during the Thermidorian period reappeared, but now again their recruitment was amongst the notables and the Ancien Régime local scientific and literary academies. The *Société d'Emulation*, for

<sup>127</sup> Poupé, *Le Département du Var...*, pp.333-38.

<sup>128</sup> Boutier & Boutry, *Atlas de la Révolution...*, p.12 & 58.

<sup>129</sup> de Certeau, M., Julia, D., & Revel, J., *Une politique de la langue, la Révolution française et les patois*, Paris, 1975, p.40.

<sup>130</sup> ADV, 1L2004 & 1L1492.

instance, very much a body emanating from the main local industries and the professions, was a friendly society of the bourgeois Draguignan.<sup>131</sup> It was founded in 1800, at the same time that the town acquired a Préfet who, in turn, gave his blessing to the first local newspaper, whose aim was the improvement of agriculture and craftsmanship, the *Journal du Var*, itself edited by the *Société*. It was then that the Public Library was founded, and also the Botanical Garden. Monsieur Caussemille, the soap, spirits, and vinegar maker and trader whom we have already frequently met, was very much part of this change in cultural interests: in 1791, as a young man, he belonged to the *Jeune Cercle* and the *Société des Amateurs Dramatiques et Lyriques*; then in 1819, almost 30 years later, the Préfet nominated him as President of the *Société d'Agriculture et de Commerce* for the Var.<sup>132</sup> A typical trajectory for a representative of the literate classes? To a certain extent it was, although the majority of 'those who counted' in Provence after the Revolution had been notables of the *Ancien Régime*.<sup>133</sup> Caussemille finally occupied a place of social and political prestige in the town because, like the nobles and high ranking civil servants and magistrates of the Paris administration, he had had a fairly classical, albeit curtailed, education at the local college, and had developed at home out of personal inclination a taste for good writing and belles-lettres, as we shall see later;<sup>134</sup> and beside all of this, he had a 'useful' education in mathematics and physics, not unlike that of his English counterparts who had developed their own different culture, as we have seen. Crouzet's remark that, in France, businessmen had "either a very elementary or a purely classical education" is only partly true;<sup>135</sup> moreover, the important role he attributes to Dissenters in Britain in

<sup>131</sup> Noyon, *Statistique*..., and ADV, 10T 1/3.

<sup>132</sup> ADV, Caussemille papers, 5J1.

<sup>133</sup> Bergeron, L., & Chaussinaud-Nogaret G., eds., *Grands notables du Premier Empire*, Paris, 1988, vol. 18: *Le Var*, pp.22-31.

<sup>134</sup> Chapter 4.

<sup>135</sup> Crouzet, F., *Britain Ascendant: Comparative Studies in Franco-British Economic History*, Cambridge, 1990, (transl., French ed. 1985), p.31.

forging a more modern and useful culture had its equivalent in France, the small but well educated Protestant minority, active in trade and industry in the Languedoc, and in ports like Marseille (where they were in majority amongst the successful merchants), Bordeaux, and Rouen.<sup>136</sup> The Protestant presence in the Var, however, was minimal,<sup>137</sup> and there was less of a felt need for a distinctive culture, different from that of the country gentry, as there was in England, because in our very urbanised Basse-Provence,<sup>138</sup> the equivalent of English country gentry lived in the towns. They were both nobles and ‘bourgeois’, whose living was mostly derived from agricultural capital.<sup>139</sup>

The ‘new’ culture which was being established in Draguignan, as in Warwick and Leamington at the same period, the culture of the libraries, botanical gardens, museums, and the interest in science, was that of the speakers, readers, and writers of the French language.<sup>140</sup> From the latter years of the Revolution, French, as opposed to the local dialects, became the best route to the new regime of meritocracy inscribed in article 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of Men — “all citizens are equally admissible to all dignities, and to all public posts, according to their capacities, and without other distinction than their virtues and talents”. At the same time, and as in Warwick again, the ‘old’ town culture was still thriving, in particular at the beginning of our period, in

<sup>136</sup> Beaurepaire, P.Y., ‘Le rayonnement international et le recrutement étranger d’une loge maçonnique au service du négoce protestant’, *Revue Historique*, 293 (1995), pp.263-288.

<sup>137</sup> There were only 12 Protestants in Draguignan for instance, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, according to Noyon’s *Statistique du Département du Var*, Draguignan, 1846, p.381.

<sup>138</sup> Lepetit, B., *The pre-industrial urban system...*, p.30, where he shows that the Var was still one of the most urbanised area of France, even as late as 1836.

<sup>139</sup> Agulhon, M., *La vie sociale en Provence intérieure au lendemain de la Révolution*. Paris, 1970, pp.60 & 266.

<sup>140</sup> Arthur Young remarked, about the three men who served him as guides along the coast of Basse-Provence in 1789, that “amongst the three there was no French enough for half an hour’s conversation”, *Travels...*, p.217.

the form of *fêtes* and processions, a culture therefore which, although essentially linked to religious festivals, was eminently sociable and more and more 'civic' in character.<sup>141</sup> Although the number of religious festivals was considerably diminished, or celebrated only on Sundays rather than week days,<sup>142</sup> they remained a very important part of the social life of Povençal towns, even during and after the Revolution. With this culture of festivals went the long established culture of song and music: essentially an oral culture which carried on even into the republican culture of the *chambrées*.<sup>143</sup> The continuance of this strong oral culture, and the pageant and music of the Catholic religion, is an even more marked feature of the 'baroque' religion of Provence; opposed to it is the fairly substantial written Protestant and Dissident culture that we found in Warwick.<sup>144</sup> Instead of the virulent pamphlets and letters which animated Warwick social and political life, Draguignan had farandoles: for instance in 1792, in Lorgues, near Draguignan, the *Ça ira* farandole danced around the town in competition with the *Ça n'ira pas* royalist farandole; amongst the first one were the people, including women and children, say the police report about the incident.<sup>145</sup> The farandole was often used by the royalists, who probably tried to by-pass the wordy republican culture. Because there was still a flourishing oral culture, the next preferred means of communication was the letter, which purports after all to be a conversation with a distant listener; and, by our period, Provence had become quite a mobile and open society, this brought about by the ever widening commercialisation of agriculture. The voluminous correspondence of the Caussemille family is a testimony of this, as

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<sup>141</sup> Vovelle, M., *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris, 1976, esp. pp.78-90.

<sup>142</sup> The bishop for the Var decreed in 1792, for instance, that, according to the wishes of the Convention, only the most important eight religious festivals would be celebrated during the week, while all the others would be postponed to the nearest Sunday, (ADV, IL 1087).

<sup>143</sup> Agulhon, M., *La République au village*, Paris, 1970, pp.200-201.

<sup>144</sup> We shall explore later, in chapter 3, the importance of this difference for the use of the written word in both countries.

<sup>145</sup> ADV, L270, *Police générale et administrative, district de Draguignan*.

well as the fact that the Var became one of the better served areas in France for postal services, and one of its most active users.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, Draguignan was on the road going from Lyon to Italy, and was a *route de première classe* in Napoleon's classification of roads.

It should be said in conclusion that, if this comparative study of two towns has been possible because they are of the same type, it must be emphasised that neither are typical at the national level.<sup>147</sup> Draguignan has to be placed in the peculiar context of its long history of being, up to the Revolution, part of a *Province* with its own original institutional and linguistic system, and its high rate of urbanisation.<sup>148</sup> Warwick, too, has to be studied in its place as half-way between the industrialising and Dissenting North, and a traditional background of county town and country gentry. The towns themselves, however, compare well in most aspects of urban factors: their size, their population, their role and place in their region, their antiquity, and their administrative role (which is, however, no indicator of their minor place in the regional economical hierarchy of towns). These two towns have also a much more widely representative interest: on the one hand, their considerable population of artisans whose trade required a good level of literacy and, on the other, their capacity as administrative towns to fulfil their role as stepping stone for the literati. Both elements were facets of the new 'urban factor', this new 'shaping force'<sup>149</sup> which helped the formation of a class of citizens

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<sup>146</sup> Arbellot, G. & Lepetit, B., *Atlas de la Révolution française, I, Routes et communications*, Paris, 1987, p.44.

<sup>147</sup> This problem of the irrelevance, in some cases, of comparisons at national level, has been pointed out by Crossick, G. & Gerhard-Haupt, H., in *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780-1914*, London, 1995, p.232.

<sup>148</sup> Duby, *Histoire...*, p.507, says that in the small towns of Basse-Provence, "familiar landmarks were stronger than more general loci like the State, France, etc... Their landmarks were the *corpus*, *domus*, *locus*, *pagus*, and *tempus*." (the corporation, the home, the town, the land around the town, the seasons, and local festivals, rather than the official calendars).

<sup>149</sup> Fraser, D., 'The urban history masquerade: recent trends in the study of English urban

more assertive and cohesive in the knowledge and establishment of its distinctive culture. How this distinctive culture was acquired is the subject of our next chapter.

## Chapter 2

### Buying education

Our period was a time when the written word and its apprenticeship began their long and tortuous journey to prominence in the preoccupations of both the people and their administrators; when the private sphere of education became a public concern, and the increasing concern of the eighteenth-century public in order to fulfil their political, social, and economic ends. In the case of our two towns, however, we encounter different levels of emphasis as regards the written word. On the English side, we have a well-established Protestant notion of the importance of the written word, while in Draguignan we have the more oral and visual culture of the 'baroque' catholicism of Provence, although there is recognition of the value of the mastery of the written word too, in this town of lawyers and administrators. Indeed in the two towns there was a potential for a sizeable demand for education, both because of their role as administrative towns and providers of services, and because of the presence of strong emulation between well-represented religious denominations seeking to control popular education, as elsewhere in this period. This competition is seen by some historians as the mainspring of popular education, a competition born out of conflict and complicity:<sup>1</sup> conflict between the established and dissident churches, the Protestants and Catholics in France (but more important, as we shall see later, between the Church and the State), the Anglicans and the Dissidents in England; and complicity in their desire, grown out of a sense of insecurity, to control the poor and have them behave as a meek, hard-working class, well-contented with its lot.<sup>2</sup> Out

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<sup>1</sup> Furet, F. & Ozouf, J., *Lire et écrire, l'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 2 vols, Paris, 1977, vol. 1, p.47. Also Stone, L., 'Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, 42, (1969), pp.69-139, pp.82-83.

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting discussion of this religious move towards social control, see Hole, R., *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832*, Cambridge, 1989.

of this complicity was born the essentially moral and religious foundation of popular education which marked our period. A different philosophy of education was expressed at the time: but Thomas Paine's and Condorcet's plea for an egalitarian state education were much too visionary and novel to be much heeded, even by the followers of Paine or, in the case of Condorcet, by the revolutionary government which, in principle, was in favour of state education. Paine suggested a sort of family allowance of £4 for every child under 14 years of age for their parents to send them to school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, so that "ignorance will be banished from the rising generation".<sup>3</sup> Condorcet is less explicit about the financing of his programme, but much more detailed about the contents and pedagogy of education. He is especially emphatic about the necessity of equality of education for girls and boys and, what is more, that schools should be mixed with teachers of either sex.<sup>4</sup> In a reaction, the nineteenth century was obsessed with offering *separate* education to girls and boys. For example the Reverend Boudier, in Warwick, was rather pleased with the fact that the National Society spent £1000 to provide separate entrances for boys and girls in the town's free school.<sup>5</sup> But the two educational Societies, the British and Foreign and the National, were the true dividers of the sexes in popular education.

The controversy about the rights and wrongs of education for the poor, and of charity schools, was rather out of breath by the last decades of the eighteenth century. yet by no means resolved. As late as 1870, Warwick had its Bernard Mandeville in the person of the Reverend Boudier who, that year, published his *Statistics of*

<sup>3</sup> Paine, T., *The Rights of Man*, Part II, in the chapter 'Ways and Means', p.241, Harmondsworth, 1985, (originally published 1791).

<sup>4</sup> Condorcet, Marquis de, 'Cinq Mémoires sur l'Instruction Publique', 1792, in Buisson, F., *Condorcet*, Paris, 1929.

<sup>5</sup> Boudier, J., *Statistics of Schools and Educational Progress*, Warwick, 1870, (WCRO).



*School And Educational Progress in the past fifty nine years.* in the form of a letter to the civic authorities and trustees of educational charities in Warwick. It is a plea against secular and compulsory education. Its interest lies in the fact that he takes stock of the system of education available in Warwick since the beginning of his ministry in the town in 1811 and before. He is of the opinion that the amount and quality of education provided were entirely satisfactory, but of course he was campaigning against compulsory education, so his evidence might be somewhat biased.

The town had well established ancient charity schools. One was founded by King Henry VIII's Charter, and provided by a charity of the same name: the King's School, still in existence today, but no longer a free school.<sup>6</sup> Although not specified in the Charter, it was conducted as a grammar school which taught the classical languages, dialectic, rudiments of philosophy, composition, singing, and music. The school had two good classrooms, one of which was built by the Corporation in 1799 and was also used by the schoolmaster as a dwelling room. The freedom of the school was given only to the children born in Warwick, and it did not teach the rudiments, which led our Reverend Field to remark in 1815 that "as the course of instruction prescribed by the statute, includes only the learned languages, its utility as a free school, for the purposes of general education is of course very limited".<sup>7</sup> In fact, its general utility to the town was limited in other way. A Commissioners' Report reveals that, since the 1780s, the present Schoolmaster had taken no more than an average of five free scholars in the last 34 years and even fewer boarders and fee-paying pupils. From the same report, we learn that the pupils on the foundation still had to pay 1L 11s and 6p entrance, and five shillings each half year "for firing and cleaning", which led our commissioners to remark sternly that this is "scarcely compatible with the character of a free school ... We cannot but observe with regret how very little benefit has of late years been derived from this

<sup>6</sup> VCH, 2, pp.299-318.

<sup>7</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, p.84.

establishment,” a conclusion that is remarkably similar to that of Field’s a few years before. However, the report seems to find that the, to us, not surprising lack of enthusiasm for the school on the part of the inhabitants of the town, was a mitigating factor.<sup>8</sup> For the basic subjects — reading, writing, and arithmetic — the scholars from the grammar school could go to the other charity school; their time-table allowed generously for it as their day at the King’s started at 10.30 or 11 and finished at 3.30, after a lunchtime break. Many grammar schools had fallen into decay by the second half of the eighteenth century, but many actually survived and adapted to the utilitarian demands of the time in two ways: either they changed into ordinary parish schools or charity schools, or they became fee-paying schools where useful subjects other than the classics would be taught at the students’ request. In the first category was the Grammar School in Hampton Lucy, outside Warwick, which had “dwindled into a common parish school ... conducted with attention and efficiency” by the assistant, the master having long ago moved into a distant living.<sup>9</sup> Stratford Free Grammar School is an instance in the county of the other type of adaptation: here the Corporation took measures to revive the decaying school by making it fee-paying and by teaching English Grammar besides ‘the learned languages’, “to induce some of the more reputable inhabitants to send their children”. The commissioners criticized this practice and suggest that payment should be discontinued. Under the enormously long lasting rule, or lack of rule, of its master, the Reverend Innes, Warwick Grammar School remained at a complete standstill and did not respond to the dramatic changes in demand for education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Again and again, the commissioners, faced with the ‘dwindling’ of local grammar schools, made remarks in the spirit of the following: “there are at present no

<sup>8</sup> *Commissioners Report on Charities and Education for the Poor*, for the County of Warwickshire, 1819-1837, London, 1890.

<sup>9</sup> *Further Report of the Commissioners*, appointed in pursuance of the two Acts designed to inquire into Charities for the Education of the Poor, Printed in 1826 by order of the House of Commons, (WCRO).

inhabitants ... who are in a situation to require classical instruction for their children". The Academies were now providing what the growing middling classes required, and the gentry either educated their children at home, or sent their sons to prestigious public schools and their daughters to expensive 'seminaries'. It is only in the second half of the nineteenth century that Warwick grammar school became an active, high status, high fee-paying school, where the middle classes felt they could send their children without losing face.<sup>10</sup> In France, on the contrary, an efficient system of State secondary education was created already in 1795 as a deliberate policy, as we shall see later.

Another charity school, established in the ancient chapel of St Peter's since 1718, was under the direction of the mayor and corporation, but provided for in great part by charitable bequests.<sup>11</sup> It had two schoolrooms and lodgings for the mistress and master, the girls' schoolroom also serving as dwelling-room. The schoolmaster was appointed by the trustees of the several charities and by the corporation. At the time of the survey the schoolmaster had filled the office for 47 years since 1789, and before that he had been a scholar in the same school. He was entitled to an assistant apprenticed to him, while "the mistress his wife had his [sic] eldest daughter" as her assistant.<sup>12</sup> Time-table and curriculum were a complicated affair, as the various charities provided only for a certain number of children under different rules,

<sup>10</sup> In the *Report on Secondary Education in the Counties of Surrey, Warwick and Yorkshire*, London, 1895, pp.54-55, the Commissioners report that "it is generally agreed in Warwick that the fees of the Grammar School are too high, and the fees in the middle school too high for competent children in the elementary schools", [but that some want] to keep the high social status of the school". Earlier (p.49) they make a very interesting remark: "The high quality of Secondary Education in Warwick and Leamington is not due to an unsatisfied craving on the part of the population, but to an effort...to tempt demand by supply." This is a terse description of education as a luxury consumers' good whose development started a century earlier.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Greville's, Earl Brooke's, Thomas Oken's (this one still in existence), and Fulke Weale's.

<sup>12</sup> *Commissioners Report...*, p.770.

especially as regards the education of the girls on their respective foundation. All the boys were instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and so were the girls on Mrs Greville's charity, but the girls on Lord Brooke's were taught only reading, knitting, sewing, and spinning. However the Report says that the master voluntarily permitted those "who are sufficiently qualified for it" to attend with the others to learn writing and arithmetic. To complicate matters further, girls and boys had to be separated, and here the Commissioners' Report seems to delight in detailing this intricate organisation:

The boys' school opens at six in the morning, in summer, and seven in the winter. They are absent from 9 to ten at breakfast, from 12 to 2 at dinner, and break up at 5 in the evening. The girls' school opens at 9 in the morning. Those on Mrs Greville's foundation go into the boys school till ten (the boys being absent) to learn writing and arithmetic, and they also attend there during the absence of the boys from 1 to 2 for the same purpose. These girls are absent from 12 to 1 for dinner and the other girls from 12 till 2.<sup>13</sup>

St Peter's school catered for 36 girls and 39 boys coming from the parishes of both St Mary's and St Nicholas', and these small numbers remained unchanged until well into the 1830s, when the Commissioners Report was concluded.<sup>14</sup> And their conclusion was that the school "had acquired a high character". This opinion was shared by the Reverend Boudier who says that "it has ever enjoyed good repute, as admirably conducted, especially turning out boys well qualified for situations in offices and shops, whether of bankers, solicitors, or tradesmen"; interestingly, he describes it as 'a middle-class school', a label which would not have been available to

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<sup>13</sup> *Commissioners Report...*

<sup>14</sup> These figures are quoted by both Field in 1815, in *An Historical...*, and by West, in 1830, in West, W., *The History, Topography and Directory of Warwickshire*, Birmingham, 1830.

him earlier in the century. Indeed, charity schools were not open to everybody: the charities' prescriptions were that the children should be chosen by the trustees and churchwardens, and criminality, pauperism, illegitimacy, and dissent from the established church meant unconditional refusal. Then the next barrier was, surprisingly, the ability to read, usually a few lines from the Bible. For example, the seven year olds who want to go to the charity school at Hampton Lucy "must be able to read a verse of the Bible for admission".<sup>15</sup> In fact some charities provided for the education of children to enable them to be admitted to the charity school, an early version of the 'prep schools' of today. For instance, from the Commissioners Report, we learn that, in 1790, the Turner's charity in Kenilworth provided for the education, by a schoolmistress, of eight poor *protestant* children in reading, to enable them to go to the neighbouring charity school which was funded by a Quaker charity and was open "to all poor boys who choose to attend".

There were a few other opportunities for learning: one was in the 'School of Industry' which was created, patronized, and mostly subsidised by the Countess of Warwick and a few Warwick ladies, "to provide for the education of poor girls, and to form them to habits of virtuous order and industry".<sup>16</sup> It catered originally for 60 girls, aged between 8 and 14, who were clothed in brown stuff gowns and straw bonnets, and who were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, knitting, and spinning, from Michaelmas to Lady Day. The school was run according to Dr Bell's principles adopted by the conservative Anglicans who had founded the National Society for the Provision of Education for the Poor. Theirs was a rival organisation to the originally non-sectarian British and Foreign School Society which was using a very similar monitorial system of education propounded by the Dissenter Joseph Lancaster. The School of Industry was run with the help of four older girls who were employed as 'monitressess'. The pupils had dinner at the schoolroom, and on

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<sup>15</sup> *Commissioners Report*..., p.326, and *Further Report*..., p.534.

<sup>16</sup> Field, *A Historical*..., p.91.

Sundays they met for religious instruction and went to church together — a fairly comprehensive if basic education. Unfortunately, by 1841, standards were found by The National Society to have declined drastically, and the number of pupils had dropped to 40. The school had obviously turned into a provider of domestic servants, giving training in all types of sewing, from dawn to dusk, with only one hour devoted to reading.<sup>17</sup> So, to summarise, the numbers of children receiving free day schooling was small: 75 boys and girls at St Peter's School, 60 girls at the School of Industry, and a sprinkling of boys at the King's School.

In tune with the philanthropic mood of the period, Sunday Schools were established in 1787 by a committee of thirteen persons: the Earl, the clergy, the mayor, and leading inhabitants. Philanthropy in eighteenth-century Warwickshire very much fluctuated in the provision of charity following contemporary opinion and trends.<sup>18</sup> During the years of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, especially between 1790 to 1810, there was a sharp decline in the provision of charity for education, especially for books, while their provision had increased in the 20 years leading up to the Revolution. So we enter the period of the Sunday schools. Their establishment soon gave rise to dramatic controversies in the town, described by Thomas Laqueur as a “full-scale pamphleteering war in the best eighteenth-century tradition”.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, in a letter,<sup>20</sup> the Reverend Field accused the Established Churches of excluding and threatening dissenting families whose children were not

<sup>17</sup> *VCH*, 8, p.539, and *Rules to be observed by the Children of the School of Industry in Warwick 1819*, Sharpe and Son, Letter-press and copper plate Printers, Advertiser Offices, Warwick, 1819, (WCRO).

<sup>18</sup> Allen, L., ‘The Changing Face of Philanthropy in 18th-century Warwickshire’, unpublished MA thesis, 2 vols, University of Warwick, 1992, p.44.

<sup>19</sup> Laqueur, T.W., *Religion and Respectability — Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850*, Yale, 1976, p.195. These pamphlets are all listed in the catalogue of Samuel Parr's library: *Bibliotheca Parriana*, London, 1827, p.84.

<sup>20</sup> Field, W., *Memoirs...*, p.303.

registered in the parish. The Reverend Miller, incumbent of St Mary's Church, replied in an equally published and publicised letter,<sup>21</sup> accusing the Dissenters of having "a sinister end in view", to which Field replied that Mr Miller had malignantly timed his attacks to come just after the Birmingham riots, and that he had threatened to deprive families of the bread and coal they were entitled to, or even of their employment, if children were not withdrawn by their parents from the Dissenters' School. A meeting was convened at the Court-House where John Parkes, the Unitarian manufacturer, presented a defence of their school. One of their arguments was that at least most of the children coming out of their school could read and some of them could write, and that they were not luring parents from the Church but bringing to a place of worship "those among the lower ranks of society, who are accustomed to attend no place of public worship at all".<sup>22</sup> Finally, a handbill was circulated around the town by the supporters of the established churches expressing "the alarm of the clergy and several inhabitants of the Borough" at the Sunday schools established by the Dissenters. The break-up of the non-denominational Sunday School was consummated — but it is difficult to ascertain whether it "made possible the integration of the Sunday schools into the working-class community", as according to Laqueur it did elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> St Mary's taught reading and religion to 65 boys and 80 girls, St Nicholas' the same to 30 boys and 40 girls, the Unitarians to 30 girls and 30 boys, the Independent Dissenters with 39 teachers to 120 boys and 100 girls. So the Dissenters' effort was considerable in the domain of basic education. In their early days, financial support for the Sunday schools came essentially from the nobility, the gentry, and the clergy but, later on, their funding was mostly derived

<sup>21</sup> Miller, R., *Remarks upon a Letter addressed to the Inhabitants of Warwick by Wiliam Field*, Warwick, 1791.

<sup>22</sup> WCRO, C371 (P), Field, W., *A Letter addressed to the Inhabitants of Warwick in Answer to several charges of a very extraordinary Kind, advanced against the Dissenters assembling in the Chapel in High street, by the the Reverend Mr Miller, Vicar of St Nicholas*, Birmingham, August 1791.

<sup>23</sup> Field, *A Letter...* p.74.

from collections at charity sermons,<sup>24</sup> and then from the sale of their printed version, which formed an important part of the local printers' activity, as we shall see later.<sup>25</sup>

It is difficult to judge whether this Sunday School Education was education or 'religious terrorism', a term taken up by E.P. Thompson. Were 'psychological atrocities' committed upon the children of the poor?<sup>26</sup> It doesn't seem that the fire and brimstone evangelical fervour of the Wesleyan school burnt in Warwick. On the other hand, the Laqueur vision of the Sunday Schools being mostly democratic and working-class might be rather too radical for Warwick, especially as the Lancastrian School movement with its "genuine educational intentions...and the utilitarian concern for equipping children for industrial occupations", granted by Thompson, had not been able to establish a school in the town. In fact, Thompson goes on to say that: "The Puritan character-structure, was not something which could be confiscated solely for the service of the Church and the employer. Once the transference was made, the same dedication which enabled men to serve these roles, will be seen in the men who officered trade unions and Hampden Clubs, educated themselves far into the night, and had the responsibility to conduct working-class organization."<sup>27</sup> We should therefore trust the common sense of the local community to utilise for their own ends, whatever education they received — a belief Samuel Parr expressed a century earlier, as we shall see later.

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph Priestley, for instance, preached a sermon for charity schools at Warwick Unitarian chapel, to which the Anglican Samuel Parr went "knowing that in the city of Dublin, churchmen, dissenters, and catholics, lay aside all distinctions to attend sermons for charity schools". Parr himself went to preach one at Birmingham. Field, *Memoirs*..., p.289.

<sup>25</sup> Chapter 3, and see Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability*..., p.85.

<sup>26</sup> Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the Working Class*, (1st. ed. 1963), Harmondsworth, 1980, p.415.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, *The Making*.... , p.417.



However the children we have dealt with so far were not paupers, as we have seen from the conditions of admission to the charity schools, and from the Reverend Boudier's description. Some of the paupers' children were catered for in St Mary's Poor House: "Humanly and judiciously regulated within",<sup>28</sup> and with a good school-room where they were taught reading, the principles of religion, and weaving and carding; others were recuperated by the Dissenting Sunday School which, as we have already seen, opened its doors to children "found in the street" whose families didn't belong to either parish, or who didn't attend any church; we know too, from William Field, that "most of them could read, and some of them could write".<sup>29</sup> And there was at least one sort of a factory school in Mr Benjamin Smart's cotton spinning factory, as the following advertisement in the *Coventry Mercury* of 14 September 1802, the year of the Factory Act "for the preservation of health and morals of apprentices and others employed in cotton and other mills", seems to suggest: "Wanted — A middle aged woman who is properly qualified to manage a number of Female Apprentices; as the situation is wholly domestic, it will be necessary that she understands plain Sewing, and can instruct the Children in Reading...".<sup>30</sup> We can presume as well that Joseph Parkes, the Unitarian manufacturer, was complying with the Act and must have had some kind of school in his factory which employed 500 workers. The County Gaol also had some kind of school. The Magistrates at the Quarter Sessions informed the 'Noblemen, Gentry, Clergy and Inhabitants of the County' that it was established because of the rising number of young delinquents and that, in it, "the children have been carefully instructed in the first principles of religion...and initiated into the habits of Industry".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Field, *A Historical...*, p.61.

<sup>29</sup> Field, *A Letter addressed to the Inhabitants...*

<sup>30</sup> WCRO, DR 362/50. Quoted in Lane, J., *Warwickshire: Local History Sources*, Leamington Spa, 1988, p.6.

<sup>31</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, Dec 10, 1816.

Finally, in 1815, the National Educational Society became active on two fronts in Warwick. First, it started classes in the gaol with seven pupils: a year later, there were eight pupils, all girls. *An Address of the Society for diffusing Information on the Subject of Capital Punishment and Prison Discipline*, published in 1817,<sup>32</sup> comments on the improvements in the county gaol: “Under the superintendence of the county magistrates, a school has been formed for the children; and many of the boys, who knew not a letter when they entered the gaol, are now able to read” — but no comment about the girls. Then, again in 1815, a meeting took place at the Court-house for the establishment of a Borough School on the ‘Madras System’, under the auspices of the National Society and initiated by the Reverend Boudier. It was a controversial meeting, and a further meeting was convened where the supporters of the National Society won, although they agreed to change the proposed resolution, thereby accepting that Dissenters’ children attending the National School would be allowed to go to their parents’ place of worship on Sundays.<sup>33</sup> A school was therefore started in St Mary’s parish, for the education of the children of the poor in the principles of the established church, with the hope that the children would learn “habits of industry, submission and economy” and that “it would contribute to the diminution of crime”.<sup>34</sup> (We can recognise the Reverend Boudier’s style.) The children were mostly under ten with a few staying until the age of 12: “our first aim”, says Boudier, “is religious teaching” then, at the price of one penny a week, reading, writing, and counting. The educational system devised and exported in 1813 by British colonial power, and tried on the “benighted” Indians in Madras,<sup>35</sup> was re-imported to uplift the poorer classes. This ameliorative education, usually given in the open in India, using sand as a writing medium, had now reached the shores of

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Lane, *Warwickshire...*, p.92.

<sup>33</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, 18 March 1815.

<sup>34</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, 18 and 25 March 1815.

<sup>35</sup> A term used by the *Madras Christian Instructor* quoted by Viswanathan, G., *Masks of Conquest*, New York, 1989, p.81.

Warwick. Whether the Warwick children used sand trays for writing or not, a glowing report on the school appeared in the local paper in 1818, under the title MADRAS SCHOOL, stating that the average daily attendance had been a hundred boys and 45 girls, and that the whole number of children who had benefited so far was over 400. The boys seem to have specially benefited, it says, as from a position of total illiteracy, they are now “able to read their Bible fluently and write with a good clear hand”.<sup>36</sup>

Thus the non-denominational dream came to an end in Warwick, unlike its neighbour Coventry, where churches and chapels built schools in association, and where the majority of school attenders actually attended schools managed by Dissenters.<sup>37</sup> Dr Parr, a very early proponent of education for the poor and a supporter of non-denominationalism, was a great admirer, according to Field, of the Lancastrian Schools, liking their cheap, simple, rational mode of teaching. Of the National Schools, he didn’t like the ‘national’ label as their aim was “to inculcate wholesome prejudice quite as much as useful knowledge” but, he added quite cunningly, “once the common people have the key of knowledge, they will make proper use of it, in spite of all”.<sup>38</sup> The same notion was expressed by Sir Francis Burdett, in 1815, at a dinner in Warwick at which both Parr and Field were present, where he had come to give evidence in Major Cartwright’s trial. His view was that the diffusion of knowledge to the masses meant that intelligence was “working its way upwards...forcing onto those of higher station the necessity of reading, inquiring, and reflecting”.<sup>39</sup> However Parr decided to compromise, and he generously supported both British Society and National Schools, faithful to his ecumenism. As we have seen earlier, Parr went quite happily to Dissenters’ services

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<sup>36</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, 21 February, 1818.

<sup>37</sup> *VCH*, 8, p.299.

<sup>38</sup> Field, *Memoirs...*, 1, p.302.

<sup>39</sup> Field, *Memoirs...*, 2, p.202.

and charity sermons.<sup>40</sup> Field, who was poorer and maybe less generous than Parr, saw the whole National school affair in the same light as present historians: “The signal success of the Lancastrian Schools, working on the fears of the high-church clergy, soon roused them into action”,<sup>41</sup> and he suggested that they established their own schools, the National Schools, in ‘self-defence’ — the argument that emulation and competition were breeders of popular education. A beautiful illustration of it is reflected in the comment of the Reverend Trotman in 1818, in his report on education in his parish in Leamington outside Warwick, as part of a national inquiry: “The establishment of a National school is most desirable, especially as a chapel has been lately erected, to which every means that can be devised, are practised, to entice the lower orders of the parishioners from the church.”<sup>42</sup>

In the *Victoria County History* for Warwickshire, J.G. Tyson remarks that the Birmingham Charity Schools underwent a great change in the last ten years of the eighteenth century: not just reading, but also writing and arithmetic were now also taught, albeit to boys only, and there was a much stricter separation of boys and girls. This also applied to Warwick at a much earlier date, but the girls fared somewhat better in Warwick where, although like everywhere else they were barred from the grammar school, they seem to have had a better chance of learning writing and arithmetic than it is generally assumed, both at St Peter’s and at the School of Industry. This is true at least for the period before the decline of the latter, which we have alluded to earlier. Yet, as we have seen from the quoted remarks, those who gauged the success of the available education at the time were preoccupied with its benefits to the boys. There seems to have been a different bias towards education for girls in the two parishes: St Mary’s providing much more generously for the boys in its Parish, at both day and Sunday schools, roughly in the proportions of two boys

<sup>40</sup> Chapter 1, and Field, *Memoirs....*, p.289.

<sup>41</sup> Field, *Memoirs....* 2, p.340.

<sup>42</sup> *Digest of Parochial Returns*, Parliamentary Sessions, 1819, IX, Warwickshire.

for one girl; St Nicholas had more girls in its day school, with a slight advantage for the boys in the Sunday school. St Nicholas being a poorer parish, the boys were either apprenticed or employed in the local factories rather than sent to school, while St Mary's girls were more likely to attend private schools. It is interesting to find that, at Hatton, Dr Parr's parish, the charity school provided for only 81 boys, an injustice which Parr deplored. However there were two schools for girls in the village, taking 60 pupils for a fee. It would seem therefore that, for such a small village (272 inhabitants), every child was catered for, and we know that under Parr's good administration of the charity funds, Bibles and prayer books were distributed to all the children and their parents. Moreover we learn that he was anxious to raise the salary of the schoolmaster, showing a not so common notion of the importance of the teacher.<sup>43</sup> From the Commissioners Reports and the Parochial Returns, we can glean much about the climate of opinion on education, and about the variety of schooling on offer within the county. From almost every parish, we get the comment that the poor want more in the way of education, and only one respondent, the vicar of Wellesbourne near Warwick, commented that "the poor want neither means nor encouragement to educate their children but they take them away so early to work in the fields, that the full advantage of their schooling is not obtained".<sup>44</sup> The returns from the villages show that, contrary to what is often thought, the rural communities often did better in the way of schooling for the poor than the towns, which were under the much greater pressure of an increasing pauper population. Finally, Warwick was remarkable for the longevity of its teachers; indeed this is a general feature of the town's employees as we have seen and shall see again. In other places we see assistants taking over the teaching in the absence of the master or, in Southam, three schoolmistresses being paid a pension as, in 1817, a National school replaced the charity school — an enlightened adaptation of the funding charity. Warwick seems to have been over-respectful of the principles laid down by the

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<sup>43</sup> *Digest of Parochial Returns...*

<sup>44</sup> *Digest of Parochial Returns...*

founding charities, except when it did not through negligence, as in the case of the King's School, which was allowed to forget its purpose and impetus as a free school.

But charity schools, Sunday schools, and other free schools provided only basic literacy; for those who wanted more, for social and economic reasons, there were the private day schools and boarding establishments and academies.<sup>45</sup> These establishments were part of the commodities on offer in the town and its neighbourhood; they often had a short life, but others like St John's School for girls, then later in the nineteenth century for boys, opened by the Misses Fowler, ran from 1791 to 1881. The other schools were on a smaller scale, often in the teacher's house: schools such as Samuel Parr's, who took seven boarders,<sup>46</sup> or his friends, the Misses Byerley, who ran a boarding school for girls in the years 1810 to 1818, before moving it first to Barford, a village outside Warwick, and later to Stratford-on-Avon where it grew in reputation and size. Their pupils were often the sisters of Parr's boarders. They were taught English, Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Composition, Geography, the Use of the Globes, Ancient and Modern History, and 'extras' like French, Music, Drawing, Dancing, Writing, and Arithmetic.<sup>47</sup> There is no information on informal schools in people's homes, for instance by the Quakers, but the minutes of Quaker Meetings show their concern about the education of the poorer children amongst their members.<sup>48</sup> The Academies were schools often run

<sup>45</sup> The first issue of the *Warwick Advertiser*, 4 January 1806, announces the reopening of the Warwick Academy run by the Rev. Kendall, and of Mrs Roe's School in the High Street, and of two more in neighbouring villages. Twenty years later, *Pigot's Directory* lists ten Academies (boarding or day) in Warwick alone.

<sup>46</sup> William Field notes that Parr gave up having private students in 1798, during the stormy period of the French Revolution since, because of his opinions, there were few applicants! Field, *Memoirs...*, 1, p.193.

<sup>47</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, January 13, 1810, and Hicks, P. D., *A Quest of Ladies, the Story of a Warwickshire School*, Birmingham, 1949.

<sup>48</sup> Two of the queries to be answered at each meeting were: "Is it your care by Example and Precept

by Dissenters, or attended by them; this might be the reason why, from about 1814, as the desire for education increased, we begin to find ‘Seminaries’ for young ladies or young men cropping up in the advertisement columns of the *Warwick Advertiser*, probably to distance themselves from any dissenting suspicion. Like the Academies, they generally offered practical subjects, especially to the young men, who wanted to go into Trade, Agriculture, and Surveying. In 1819 and 1820, the *Warwick Advertiser* still advertised for ‘Academies’, and ‘Seminaries’, but more neutral or less pretentious ‘Establishments’, and plain and simple ‘Schools’ made their appearance. We know, from his son, and from James Bisset’s *Guide to Leamington and Warwick*,<sup>49</sup> that the Reverend Field opened a school in his own house in 1803: “His school was never a large one, and the profits from a school for boys was then a fraction only of what it is now.” No wonder, as “One of my father’s great objects in keeping a school was of course to educate his own children”<sup>50</sup>— he had fourteen!

For the children under five or six years, there must have been ‘Dame Schools’ in the back streets of Warwick; they didn’t advertise, being ad hoc neighbourhood and often ephemeral institutions. They were popular as they were cheap, close to home, and homely, without the rules and uniforms imposed in the schools run by the ‘better classes’ for the poor.<sup>51</sup> Dame Schools seem to have prospered well into the 1850s. It is only in 1833 that an Infant School was opened for 150 children in St Nicholas’ parish and, even then, we can be sure that the Dame Schools were still thriving.

to train up your children in a Godly Conversation and in frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, as also in plainness of speech, behaviour and apparels”, and: “What care is taken for the education of the offspring of the poor amongst us”. See Society of Friends: ‘Minutes of Women’s Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in Middle Warwickshire’ & ‘Minutes of Men’s Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in Middle Warwickshire’, 1700 to 1820, *Marriage Register*, Birmingham Friends Archives.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>50</sup> Field, A.S., *Reminiscences of Early Life*, Leamington, 1901, p.8 and 10.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of this see Purvis, J., *A History of Women’s Education in England*, Milton Keynes, 1991, pp.13-14.

Indeed, Dame Schools were not only in the back streets but also in the High Street: all classes used them, especially for girls, as the fee-paying day and boarding schools did not teach the rudiments. It was claimed that children learned reading faster in the Dame Schools than in the charity schools.<sup>52</sup> Teaching by parents, as David Vincent has emphasised, was another important source of literacy for poor children. Indeed, he considers it as the main source of education among what he calls the working-class.<sup>53</sup> One could say that home tuition was a necessity for both the poor and the Dissenters, and the privilege of the rich, while the middling-classes were busy earning money to send their children to decent schools where they could learn the skills to earn more money. "The aged instructing the young is a sight familiar to us all" says a Quaker educationalist and promoter of adult education in 1814, and hence, he continued, the importance of teaching women as "it is the mother who instructs children".<sup>54</sup> For an instance of home tuition of a child of the rich we have thanks to Bertie Greatheed's Diaries, the well-recorded description of the education of young Ann Caroline Greatheed by his grandfather and grandmother at Guy's Cliffe House in Warwick. Their son had been educated at home too, and the Greatheeds were strongly against prep schools, or even public schools which they saw as "a dismissal into a rough world".<sup>55</sup> Probably influenced by the memory of their dead son, and most likely by the educational ideas of their good Unitarian friends, they gave Ann Caroline an unusually rich and varied education for a girl at the time: she was taught

<sup>52</sup> Leinster-Mackay, D.P., 'Dame Schools, a Need for Review', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 34 (1976), pp.33-48.

<sup>53</sup> Vincent, D., *Literacy and Popular Culture. England 1750-1914*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.54-70.

<sup>54</sup> Pole, A., *A History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools*, 1814. repr. London. 1968, pp.62-66.

<sup>55</sup> WCRO, CR1707/116-122, Bertie Greatheed's *Journals*, especially the years between 1806 and 1816. This education is to be contrasted with that of other Warwickshire daughters of the gentry as described in Kate Thomson's *Constance*: "The young ladies might be vastly expert in horsemanship, archery, and gardening, but they were very deficient in the graces of the mind...", p.33.



Greek, Latin, Italian, and history by her grandfather, reading, French, drawing, and probably writing by her grandmother, and music by her grandmother and a piano teacher. In 1816, at age ten, she read Ovid in the Latin text, and the history of Greece. In December 1816, Bertie Greatheed wrote that he had a “comfortable indoor day spent in the education of our girl”. On 10 May 1817, this was the programme of her day: before breakfast she translated some Ovid, then some Italian, then translated into French, her music lesson and practice followed, and finally, she read to her mother. It was not all hard work though, her grandparents take her to the Whitsuntide fair in 1818 “to see a dwarf”, and later in the year, they visit the local printer, Henry Sharpe, in order for her to see the operation of printing. It is very likely that she received some kind of scientific education and was allowed to look through her grandfather’s microscope and telescope. Almost every day she went for long walks with him, or to Leamington with her grandmother, either to dancing school or to bathe; Leamington had become the mecca of the consumers of the new leisure culture.

As to the poor families, they had to resort to very cheap alphabet books and primers. Conveniently, Benjamin Collins invented the ‘battledore’, a folding cardboard alphabet which replaced the more expensive and less attractive old ‘hornbook’; he claimed to have sold 100,000.<sup>56</sup> They could easily be bought at fairs and markets or borrowed from the lending libraries attached to Sunday and National schools. For instance, a lending library was attached to the School of Industry in 1818, and the girls from the St Nicholas Sunday School had access to it. We do not have much evidence of the functional literacy of our Warwick population, except that a sizeable part of it was engaged in trades and professions which required literacy. We have one testimony, though, in the *Warwick Advertiser* of 20 December 1820, in an address to Queen Caroline presented by the Rev Wade of St Nicholas Church, signed by 750 people, and open to more signatures. The address

<sup>56</sup> Neuburg, V.E., *Popular Education in Eighteenth-Century England*, London, 1971, p.59.

defends the defenders of the Queen, the people of England, who are not ‘rabble’. but a virtuous and religious people who have available to them books “at reduced prices” which are “read eagerly by the very humblest class of the community”. To this *enlightened, open, public* meeting, the Reverend Field, who seconded the address, opposed “the *little, snug, sly, secret, skulking*” loyalist parties. This is a very interesting contemporary perception of the equation of *public* with literacy. It would seem indeed that those who signed the address to Queen Caroline were not just the enlightened gentry and the middling classes, in other words the propertied classes which were then equated with the ‘British public’.<sup>57</sup> A testimony from Field’s son, Algernon, reminiscing about the trial of Queen Caroline, says “it was the theme of universal comment...Our female servants were full of it and were so clear and confident in their views of the injustice that was being done, that I was led to say I would cheerfully lay down my life to save the Queen”.<sup>58</sup> We are left to wonder if the servants’ signatures appeared on the address. At least, we can surmise that the level of literacy didn’t decline through the pauperising effects of the industrial revolution, as it was limited and short-lived in Warwick. On the other hand, because it was short-lived, the closing down of the factories put the immigrant workers amongst the ranks of the paupers, therefore of those least likely to receive much in the way of education.

Those who could not sign their names were not necessarily paupers: marriage registers for our period show the occasional mark of a Gentleman or an Esquire, and we have another reminiscence of the Reverend Field’s son about a Warwick baker who used tallies for each customer: “How he knew which tally belonged to each customer, I forget. We kept a duplicate of our tally, and the man made a nick in our

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<sup>57</sup> John Bowles, a loyalist pamphleteer paid by the Treasury during the wars with France “enjoined loyalty and individual zeal on the British public”: by ‘British public’ he meant “not the inconsiderate clamours of the rabble... but the propertied part of the community”: quoted by Emma Vincent in ‘John Bowles and the Wars with France’, *History*, 78 (1993), pp.393-420.

<sup>58</sup> Field, *Reminiscences* ..., p.13.

duplicate tally, and his own, for every loaf he delivered. Our servants saw that he made one nick only for each loaf. Thus no writing was required.”<sup>59</sup> A further instance of illiteracy amongst the artisans’ class is given in the *Warwick Advertiser*, 1 January 1814, which published a petition from insolvent debtors intending to take the benefit of the ‘Act for the Relief of certain Insolvent Debtors in England’. Out of the 26 debtors, all artisans, victuallers, corn and coal dealers, and one labourer, eight couldn’t sign; a fair representation of general male ‘literacy’ at the time, but one would have expected ninety percent rather than sixty percent signatures from these artisans and traders. One could then speculate: is this why they were unsuccessful in their businesses?

It is accepted now that the ability to sign is not a measure of literacy; our six debtors in Warwick gaol might well have been able to find their way through a list of goods and their prices, read the Bible and even get information out of the *Warwick Advertiser*. However, to get a flavour of what Warwick inhabitants did with their pen, the Registers of Marriages are still an illuminating source. The scores between the parishes of St Mary’s and St Nicholas’ show interesting differences. The discrepancy in the ability to sign is greater between the brides and bridegrooms of St Mary’s parish than between those of St Nicholas’, which is a poorer parish. The schooling was no better for the boys there, and certainly fewer children were given private education. In both parishes we see a remarkable rise in the ability of women to sign their name. From twenty-five to thirty per cent in 1780 to fifty-five per cent in 1801 in both parishes, while the percentages of signing bridegrooms goes from sixty per cent in 1780 (thirty-seven percent for St Nicholas) to sixty-six percent in 1801. These figures correspond to the national figures. However, the fall in literacy rates which historians have observed during the industrial revolution,<sup>60</sup> although apparent

<sup>59</sup> Field, *Reminiscences* ..., p.17.

<sup>60</sup> Graff, H.J., *The Legacies of Literacy*, Bloomington Indiana, 1987, p.321; Stone, L., ‘Literacy and Education in early modern Europe, 1640-1900’, *Past and Present*, 42 (1969) pp.69-139; &

in Warwick, started later and was of shorter duration. The trough in the literacy curve from the register of marriages, is at its lowest in 1817 in Warwick. It appears that, in a sample of convicts sent for deportation to Australia between 1827 and 1840, the convicts from Warwickshire belonged to the six most literate counties at the time, and that their ability to sign correlated well with their ability to read.<sup>61</sup> This result would reinforce the argument that illiteracy didn't rise evenly during the industrial revolution.

The circulation of all this printed and written material was facilitated by the development of the Postal Service in Warwick in the early years of the nineteenth century, as in other parts of the country, in response to the increase in trade, administration, political activity, and better communications and the wider uses of writing and print. In 1807, a mail coach began to run between Warwick and Daventry; from July 1808, a mail service to and from Birmingham ran four days a week, from the Woolpack Inn where the Post Office was established and where a Nathan Sugar Baly<sup>62</sup> was both the inn-keeper and the post-master at the turn of the century. From April 1809, a service ran every afternoon to London and Birmingham, and from August 1818 a direct mail arrived before 10 am from London. There was also a service to and from Coventry and the eastern parts of the country. There were communications by coach and waggon to other parts of the country including Leicester, Gloucester and Bristol. All of this was thanks to Warwickshire roads which, by now were "remarkably good", "some of the best in the kingdom", according to the enthusiastic Reverend Field, who liked to tour about the countryside.<sup>63</sup> However, the circulation of mail was sternly overseen by the

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Nicholas, S.J. & Nicholas, J.M., 'Male Literacy, "Deskilling" and the Industrial Revolution'. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23 (1992), pp.1-18.

<sup>61</sup> Nicholas, 'Male Literacy...', pp.10-12.

<sup>62</sup> His picturesque name obviously took the fancy of the *Universal British Directory* of 1793-98, where he is listed as Nathaniel Shugar Baby!

General Post-Office: on 21 April 1810, the *Warwick Advertiser* published His Majesty's Post Master General's warning "against unlawfully sending, carrying and conveying Letters...Under this Law a Person carrying a Letter may inform against a Person sending one... Due Encouragement will be afforded to Persons who shall give Information".

As in Warwick, a considerable proportion of the population of Draguignan relied on the written word as the main tool, or an essential auxiliary, of its trade: professionals, artisans, shopkeepers, manufacturers, traders, and 'bourgeois'. What had the town got to offer in the way of schooling and teaching the mystery and art of writing? At first sight the situation seemed good: like Warwick, Draguignan had an old and well-established free school, but it took up to 200 students. The *Collège*, as it was called, was well known,<sup>64</sup> the second in importance after Toulon of the eight in the County and, like Toulon's, it was special because mathematics and science were part of its curriculum, as well as the usual classics, history, and French. This 'useful' programme of education was probably inspired by the active pedagogical thinking which occupied the thirty years leading up to the Revolution. The interest in pedagogy was partly fuelled, as in England, by a new sensibility to and an awareness of children as separate entities who could be, and needed to be, improved by an 'all-round' education — after all Rousseau's influence was still very strong in both countries, and he certainly inspired the education reformers of the Convention such as Le Pelletier Saint-Fargeau or Lakanal, all admirers of *Emile*. A reason peculiar to France was the closing of the Jesuits' colleges after the suppression of their Order in 1762, and the ensuing need for the administration to rethink education. *Emile* came

<sup>63</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, p.50.

<sup>64</sup> Most of the general information on Draguignan's primary education and the College comes from Poupé, E., *L'enseignement primaire et l'enseignement des Filles à Draguignan sous l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, Draguignan, 1887, and *Histoire du Collège de Draguignan*, Draguignan, 1899; and Julia, D., *Atlas de la Révolution Française, L'enseignement 1760-1815*, Paris, 1987.

out the same year, and during the following thirty years or so, 161 works on teaching and education were published.<sup>65</sup> Because of the scarcity of teachers, other orders had to be called on to run the colleges. For elementary education, the order of the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes* were the main pedagogues and their bible was Jean-Baptiste de la Salle's *De la Conduite de Ecoles Chrétiennes*.<sup>66</sup> A later work of his, *Les règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne à l'usage des écoles chrétiennes*, became one of the most popular reading books for schools, and resurfaced, in innumerable pirated versions, in the cheap chapbook collection, the *Bibliothèque bleue* published in Troyes.<sup>67</sup> This teaching was done in charity schools or *petites écoles*, and followed a very structured time-table which occupied every minute of the child's school life, including strict rules for reading, writing, and listening postures. As Roger Chartier felicitously says: "pedagogy here becomes an orthopedy". The target population intended by the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes* was that of the artisans. Unfortunately, the town of Draguignan landed itself with the wrong order when it replaced its secular masters by the *Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne* to teach in its college in 1644, in the wake of the Counter-Reformation: an unfortunate choice because, although they were a dedicated teaching order, they were not interested in the basics of education. Up to 1724, they ran a *petite école*, or 'ABCD class' as it was called in the College, but it was rather neglected and the community decided to exert control over its teachers who, from then on, were paid by the town to deliver the basics of reading and writing. However, the pay offered was meagre and no teachers were forthcoming so, four years on, the teachers' pay was finally increased and teaching resumed, with four schoolmasters. From 1728 to 1791, they were paid 60 *livres* a year, and they received certain advantages: a house

<sup>65</sup> Chartier, R., Compère, M. & Julia, D, *L'Education en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1976, p. 208.

<sup>66</sup> Chartier et al, *L'Education...*, pp.114-115, and p.138.

<sup>67</sup> Chartier, R., *Lecture et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1987, pp.64 and 250-55.

at a reduced rent and a small contribution from parents. They taught reading, writing, and counting and, according to their capacity and/or parental contributions, they might teach chronology, grammar, land surveying, and other practical subjects.

Until well into the eighteenth century, primary education in Provence was often still mixed, unlike in the North of France where it had been separated, according to the strict principles of the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes* who recognised the importance of education for girls, whose teaching was not to be differentiated from that for boys except that it must be separate and given by school mistresses.<sup>68</sup> It is not very clear whether there was a class for girls in the *petite école* at Draguignan. Some girls were certainly taught by the nuns who had two teaching orders in the town, the *Ursulines* and the *Visitandines*, and who received contributions from the town to that effect. The pupils learnt reading, writing, arithmetic and of course sewing. When the convents were closed in 1790, girls' education seemed rather forgotten, although a boarding school for them did open for some years. It was not until 1793 that elementary State education was remembered and organised by the Convention in the Act of December 19th, which ruled that education must be free and compulsory, and that there must be a school for every thousand inhabitants. Of course, there were no funds to implement this ambitious programme to the letter and, in 1795, the creation of elementary schools was left in the hands of the departmental administration.<sup>69</sup> The district of Draguignan opted for 33 schools (for 48,000 inhabitants), and Draguignan itself was to have four (for 6000 inhabitants). The Council agreed to pay four male teachers and three female teachers. The content of the teaching was supposed to be the same for both girls and boys, except that the girls must also do needlework (though it is not clear whether they were to do this in extra time or, which is more likely, miss out on something else). It could have been that the revolutionaries associated female education with convents and religion, and were

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<sup>68</sup> Chartier, *Lecture...*, p.232.

<sup>69</sup> Julia, D., *Atlas de la Révolution...* p.10.

therefore somewhat hostile to female education outside the family, as the funds were scarce. Therefore the convenient principle of maternal education prevailed, with Rousseau as alibi, because “a woman who has not been educated by her mother will not know how to bring up her own children”.<sup>70</sup> Talleyrand offered the nice compromise of sending girls to school until age eight but, apart from Condorcet, the majority was in favour of education in the home. Girls would have to wait until the Third Republic established standards of female education.<sup>71</sup>

After 1790, the State decrees ruling primary education were very precise on where the teaching should be done, the physical separation of schoolrooms for boys and girls, and the lodgings of the schoolmaster and of the schoolmistress. The school should have a garden<sup>72</sup> and be of easy access to the pupils.<sup>73</sup> However, because of lack of teachers, the ambitious pedagogical programme of the Revolution had to be whittled down to just reading, writing, arithmetic, and republican principles: the Revolution’s ‘four R’s’ (law of October 1795). A jury had to examine the candidate teachers; in Draguignan, its members were a lawyer, a judge, and a trader. On 10 February 1798, the County administration sent a circular letter to all the mayors on the topics of the teachers’ required qualities, schoolrooms, and hours of work (8 to 10.30 and 2 to 4.30). There were to be games and physical exercises during the free day, which was and remained Thursday until the 1970s when it was changed to Wednesday! It is difficult to assess what happened in practice, though it clearly was in the domain of elementary education that the distance between official ambitions and their realisations was at its widest. The Republic spent on primary

<sup>70</sup> Rousseau, J.J., *Emile ou l’éducation*, Paris, 1991 (first pub.1762). p.491.

<sup>71</sup> Mayeur, F., ‘The Secular Model of Girl’s Education’, in Fraisse, G., Perrot, M., eds., *A History of Women in the West*, Harvard, 1993, pp.228-245.

<sup>72</sup> Gardens loom large in all educational regulations. Rousseau’s influence again, and his insistence on fresh air and exercise for both boys and girls (*Emile*, p.455 for e.g.) but the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes* were setting great store by it long before him.

<sup>73</sup> ADV, *Instruction publique*, 1L904.



education only two per cent of the sums devoted to *instruction publique*, state education.<sup>74</sup> In fact, 'State Education' was rather synonymous with 'Secondary Education' in that period and, as we shall see below, this was where the machinery of the centralised state focused its attention. Yet the Paris revolutionaries were fully aware of the need for the education of the people, but the urgency of the tasks of building the new structures of the revolutionary State and of defending the country against its enemies, actually inspired them to use the captive audience of the hundreds of thousands of young men brought under their control by conscription to turn them *en masse* into informed citizens. The young soldiers were showered with addresses and instructions and, at the peak of the Convention's effort, 30,000 newspapers were sent daily to the army,<sup>75</sup> doubtless to be read aloud by the literate recruits to their comrades. Popular societies too, besides the army, were heavily relied upon to spread, via the written word, the ideals of the Revolution, and explain its new laws and instructions to the people.

There is a phenomenon described by Vovelle<sup>76</sup> which is worth mentioning here: the Basse-Provence was one of the areas of France with the lowest literacy rate, yet one where the number of schools and their teachers' pay was the highest. The reasons might be high absenteeism — come the good season, everybody was in the fields — or a general lack of interest in schools where French was taught in an area where Provençal was still widespread. Another phenomenon mentioned by Vovelle certainly does not apply to Draguignan. He says that, in most growing towns, education became more elitist where municipal regents were replaced by religious

<sup>74</sup> Julia, D., *Atlas...*p.11.

<sup>75</sup> Hunt, L., *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1984, p.69, and Bertaud, J.P., *La Révolution armée: les soldats-citoyens et la Révolution française*, Paris, 1979, pp.194-229.

<sup>76</sup> Vovelle, M., 'Y-a-t-il eu une révolution culturelle au dix-huitième siècle?' A propos de l'éducation populaire en Provence, *Revue d'Histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 22 (1975), pp.89-141.

teaching orders, as often happened. Draguignan kept its control over teachers until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, so there was some continuity in free and popular education. Another factor to take into account, which we have encountered in England, was the frequent resistance from parents to being regimented into sending their children to school — they preferred the more accommodating private schools, *écoles particulières* as they were called — and the Revolution did not change this tendency, which was quite strong in rural areas where children were needed in the fields in the good season. But the problem, deplored by the *Préfet* Fauchet, was that, in the centre and South of the county the good season lasted almost the whole year.<sup>77</sup> Often teachers would accommodate to this situation and teach in the evenings when the days were long.

With the Restoration, an old system of education reappeared with the *Ecoles d'Enseignement Mutuel*, very similar to the British Andrew Bell's and Joseph Lancaster's monitorial systems, and certainly inspired by them, although one of the Var teachers defended the system as being "neither a foreign, nor a Protestant import, but an invention of a priest named Paulet".<sup>78</sup> The French monitorial system had also been borrowed from the Jesuit hierarchical system of teaching, which had died with the suppression of the Order and its colleges in 1762, but it was now patronised by the *Société pour l'instruction élémentaire*.<sup>79</sup> The rules of the schools were very similar to those of the Warwick School of Industry, except that there were twice as many: 31 rules to Warwick's 15. The pupils' day was rigorously organised and, on top of religious instruction twice a week, there was an obligation to go to Church with the teacher on Thursdays, Sundays, and feast days — very reminiscent of rule 5 of the School of Industry. No doubt this was a move to supplant the dangerous

<sup>77</sup> *Statistiques générales...*, p176.

<sup>78</sup> ADV, T8-1, *Enseignement Mutuel*, 1818.

<sup>79</sup> *Histoire de l'Enseignement de 1610 à nos jours*, Actes du 95<sup>e</sup> Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1974, pp.83-104.

republican, then imperial, morality and physical games of the preceding years. This educational system became popular in both countries at roughly the same time in 1815, although it became more widespread and lasted longer in England, and in Warwick in particular, where both the National Educational Society and the British and Foreign Society were vying with each other. Draguignan pioneered the system, and trained teachers who would then go and teach in other towns; it had over a hundred pupils who were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic; and later some Latin, physics, natural sciences, drawing, and notions of history and geography were thrown in too.<sup>80</sup> No doubt it answered the felt need and popular demand for mass education in both countries, at a time when the governments, the funds, and the teachers were not forthcoming. There also was a similar ulterior motive in both countries: the improvement of morality amongst the poor and the inculcation of respect for the existing order. One lasting and quite revolutionary pedagogical aspect of the *Enseignement mutuel* — and in this it differed from its English counterparts — was the introduction of writing simultaneously with reading, as it was realised that they reinforced each other and that those pupils who only stayed in school for a year or two might have a chance to learn the basics of both and to have a chance at least to move from the ‘sand class’ to the ‘slate class’, if not the ‘pen and paper class’. A testimony for this are the lists of items to be purchased for the various *écoles mutuelles* in the area: slates and crayons loom large as well as writing charts, followed by reading and arithmetic charts.<sup>81</sup> The ancient order which had given priority to reading, and had put writing in the category of a luxury not necessarily to be dispensed to all, had been broken at last.

If we now consider secondary education, we find a marked difference from England, something to which we have already alluded. Secondary education in France occupied an increasingly prominent place in educational and pedagogical

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<sup>80</sup> ADV, T8-1, *Enseignement...*

<sup>81</sup> ADV, T8-1, *Enseignement...*

preoccupations. Eighteenth-century colleges before the Revolution were mostly in the hands of religious orders who had taken over from the disbanded Jesuits. This shift, as we have said, forced the State, which was the administrator of the former Jesuit institutions, to take control over and an interest in their organisation and their curriculum; then, with the Revolution and again under the Republic, when all religious orders were suppressed, the same rethinking had to be done. The Old Regime colleges were more broad-based than the English grammar schools: sons from the nobility, the professions, traders, and even artisans and *ménagers* or farmers would attend. They sometimes would be taught ‘useful’ subjects, besides the classics: subjects like mathematics and physics, as in Draguignan where the College boasted a science laboratory approved and supported by the municipality. Monsieur Achard, however, says in his Guide to Provençal towns: “There are few good towns in Provence without a College...These establishments are much too numerous and an ill rather than a boon as they deprive Agriculture and Arts [meaning ‘crafts’] of hands which would be useful to them.”<sup>82</sup> Another originality of these colleges was the place given to the theatre, a classless leisure activity but one which was to become the hallmark of bourgeois entertainment. It was an important part of the curriculum in all the colleges.<sup>83</sup>

The *Collège* in Draguignan was run, as we have seen, by the *Frères Doctrinaires*, but under the supervision of the municipal authorities who made a financial contribution.<sup>84</sup> It had a good reputation and the *Frères* felt it was well worth sending their best teachers there. It had nine teachers and was free for day pupils, fee-paying for boarders. Another original feature of the College was what we would now call its community spirit: its maths lessons were open to the public, so that “other young people and clerks of the town could benefit”, and Monsieur

<sup>82</sup> Achard, M., *Description historique, géographique and topographique des villes de Provence*, Aix, 1787, p.142.

<sup>83</sup> Chartier, et al., *L'Education ...*, p.160.

<sup>84</sup> Poupé, E., *Histoire du Collège...*, pp.131-142.

Caussemille must have attended as a young man, as his algebra, trigonometry and geometry book, beautifully hand-written, would testify.<sup>85</sup> The College library of 13,000 volumes was probably accessible to the public. Indeed, after the suppression of the Order, it formed the starter stock of the Public Library in the late years of the Republic, with a predominance of religious books, history and science books, and Panckoucke's *Encyclopédie Méthodique*.<sup>86</sup>

With the decline of religious orders in the last years of the Old Regime, the recruitment of teachers became difficult and, as in England, the years leading up to the Revolution saw a proliferation of *pensionats* or boarding schools, where the curriculum was practical and technical. However this did not happen in Draguignan, where private schools were never popular and certainly not encouraged by the town council who did not want competition. At the eve of the Revolution, the College was prosperous and popular. It claimed to have had 200 pupils who, as we have seen, were very much a part of the town's social life. Two or three times a year, in Roman Forum style, the pupils would present their best theses, essays, and poems and act excerpts of tragedies and comedies in the square outside the College. These public events were given great importance and could last two full days, and they certainly survived the Revolution. This is a far cry from our dormant Warwick School with its handful of pupils who might have been forgotten by the inhabitants, had the school not been on their doorstep. The impact of the College on the economic life of the town must have been modest but noticeable: the boarders, who came from all over the county, had to be fed and clothed, all the pupils needed books, paper, and all the paraphernalia of writing and drawing, and they must have spent money in the town on their free Thursdays. However, in the *Cahiers de Doléances* written by the commune of Callas in the district of Draguignan in March 1789, we find one of the rare complaints of the *Cahiers* about education. It relates to the colleges, and the

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<sup>85</sup> ADV, Caussemille, 5J1.

<sup>86</sup> Poupé, *Histoire du Collège*.... p.142.

population “begs His Majesty to cast a paternal eye on the education given in the colleges, which is often neglected, and to order its reform by proper rules in order to impart to his subjects instruction on their rights, the laws, and the progress of sciences, techniques, and in particular of agriculture”. A very enlightened programme indeed; its demands for civic education and the teaching of modern subjects is a concise critique of the old small colleges and their restricted and useless curriculum.

On 23 January 1791, the Doctrinaire brothers at the College gave their oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which brought into line church and civil administration.<sup>87</sup> In the Var, 90 per cent of the lower clergy adhered to the Constitution, the highest proportion for the whole of France. The Order remained in charge of the College until 1792, when all religious orders were suppressed. The Doctrinaires had already been dispossessed of their land and sources of income in 1789, so they sent a petition to the administration on 24 September 1792 asking for financial help in order to be able to go on running the college. Their request, transmitted by the Town Hall, was granted by the administration.<sup>88</sup> Therefore the Doctrinaires, who were dedicated pedagogues, stayed on as lay teachers, apart from two who emigrated. From then on, the history of the College is a good illustration of the tribulations of secondary education in the rest of France, and of the march of an irreversible development of an education for a broader based elite which will buy its place into society through education. From a *Collège National*, with its seven teachers still teaching mathematics and physics as well as more basic subjects like writing and arithmetic to much reduced classes, it became an *Ecole Centrale* as a result of the *Loi Lakanal* of February 1795. This new scheme of the Convention

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<sup>87</sup> See Chapter 1, and Froeschlé-Chopard, M.H., ‘L’Eglise et le peuple dans les Cahiers de Doléances: la Sénéchaussée de Draguignan fait-elle partie du Midi Rouge?’, *Provence Historique*, 36 (1987), pp.121-133.

<sup>88</sup> ADV, 1L908.

suppressed the old colleges and replaced them by one *Ecole Centrale* per 300,000 inhabitants — a hard blow to the local schools, which Dominique Julia describes as a ‘brutal deschooling’, remarking that the *Ecoles Centrales* catered for only a quarter of the population of the old colleges — while, at the same time, the entrance age was raised from nine to twelve.<sup>89</sup> Admittedly there was no upper age limit, an original feature of the scheme, which shows how the Government wanted to form its elites in the quickest way possible. But towns dragged their feet and finally the administration relented and accepted that some departments could have two schools. This is what happened in the Var, where Draguignan was entitled to its own *Ecole Centrale*, ‘supplementary’ to that at Toulon. The vision of the legislators was of an encyclopedic teaching, all subjects being taught in French; the reality was not so glorious: schools were half-empty,<sup>90</sup> and, in Draguignan, the momentous installation of the new *Département*’s administration into the school building the very same Year V of the Republic, 1797, put an end to the *Ecole Centrale*. But our dedicated teachers did not give up: they were granted permission to open a private school which, like most private schools in the Republic, was under some form of municipal control, but the number of pupils had fallen to about 60. Fortunately, Mr Fauchet, the first Prefect of the Var, was keen on education. He let it be known through the pages of the *Journal du Département du Var* (a paper which had the blessing of the administration) on 25 April 1802 that “We will take care not to form abstract scholars but to spread education generally...In a country inhabited by citizens and not slaves it is vital that education be general”, and he continued with a side-swipe at the Convention’s *Ecoles Centrales*: “Is it not strange that at the time when equality was wanted by all, the government and its legislation should have concentrated their efforts on improving only the education of the rich”.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Julia, D., *Atlas*...p.40.

<sup>90</sup> According to D. Julia, in 1789 there were 50,000 pupils in the colleges; in 1799 only 12,000 to 14,000 in the *écoles centrales*, *Atlas*...p.4.

<sup>91</sup> ADV, Per16.

Mr Fauchet probably knew what was coming, for in May of that year the Consulate replaced the *Ecoles Centrales* by two tiers of education: the *Lycées* and the *Ecoles Secondaires*. The *Lycée*, consolidated under the Empire, was there to stay. They were established in big towns, and on an inverse principle to that which governed private schools or the old colleges: the boarders were hand-picked by State inspectors, and were usually poor but good pupils who were given a grant subject to an examination, while the day-pupils were fee-paying. This is why the same issue of the *Journal du Département du Var* announced the visit of “citizens in charge of the establishment of a *Lycée* in Marseille who will choose six Draguignan pupils, nine to fourteen years of age, to benefit from the free places”. Draguignan did not qualify for a *Lycée*, so that our four remaining teachers and ex-Doctrinaires, as determined as ever, presented a petition to the municipal council for the establishment of an *école secondaire*, which was granted to them with a subsidy. The *Journal du Département du Var* was in fact rarely without a column, or a page or more, on ‘Public Education’, thus reflecting the interest of the Prefect and of the people of some prominence in the town. It announced on 12 December 1803, the solemn opening of the town’s *Ecole Secondaire* which will “contribute to the spread of enlightenment amongst our society”, and it continued: “We could not encourage parents enough to convince themselves of the great advantages of this secondary education.” It added that one hundred free places would be open subject to an entrance examination. Secondary education took pride of place yet again, probably helped by the encouragements of *Monsieur le Préfet*. On 31 August 1803, the *Journal* reported a prize-giving day at the college when the pupils did their usual public exercises and presentations in front of the Prefect and other administrative officials, the magistracy, the military, and many ‘eminent citizens’; this was then followed by a long flowery speech by the Prefect, fully transcribed over three pages. This smacks of Old Regime except that now the might of the State was on the tribune. It was back in other respects too as, in 1810, the familiar *Collèges* reappeared, also to stay, now as municipal institutions as opposed to the State *Lycées*.



We have seen how those who wanted education for their children in Warwick and its neighbour Leamington bridged the huge gaps in available secondary education with a proliferation of private schools. In France, from the Consulate onwards, we see the same phenomenon, for the same and for very different reasons. Parents were tired of the constant changes in the State organisation of education, they often objected to the teaching of republican virtues, and all the pedagogues who had gone underground in the early- and mid-1790s were coming out: nuns, priests, ex-private schools teachers, or teachers who had lost their job through lack of payment by the national or local authorities. We have seen that private schools were not popular in Draguignan, which lacked the tradition of academies started by the Dissenters out of necessity. It would have been different in pockets of strong protestantism like Haute-Provence or the Cévennes, where both the Catholics and the Protestants had to compete with each other; the Protestants of Basse-Provence were very few, their community having emigrated through the neighbouring ports to other parts of the world.<sup>92</sup> This is why, as we shall see later, the Caussemille parents, probably distrustful of the vagaries of the State system, sent their children to be educated in good stable private schools, first in the county, then out of county as far away as Aix and even Lyon, because there were few in an area where equally few people could afford them. Unlike English private schools, the French ones were regulated by an imperial decree in 1810; the State would not relinquish its hold on education, even though it could not afford to forbid private enterprise. The Prefects were asked to give feedback on the state of the schools in their Department. M. Fauchet described education in the Var as being “in the hands of priests, either isolated or in association and it is therefore essential and urgent that the Government should organise education in accordance with its own views. There is less danger in leaving the education of girls provisionally in the hands of ex-nuns as women’s influence is less direct”.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Furet and Ozouf, *Lire et Ecrire...*, vol. 1, p.70, vol. 2, pp.88-90.

<sup>93</sup> *Statistiques Générales de la France, Département du Var*, Paris, 1805, pp.21-23.

This is a beautiful cameo of the mood of the times, and it illustrates very explicitly not only the prevailing attitude to girls' education, but also the fear of the State faced by the return of the power of the Church which dominated education until the 1830s, when the balance tipped again slightly in favour of the State. It is in this early decade that the new struggle between Church and state education which marked the whole of the nineteenth century was consolidated, and its ripples are still very present today.

Our journey along the paths of literacy in Draguignan leaves us with a sense of missed opportunities. The Revolution brought about new pedagogical ideas and ambitions, but they were mostly not applied because of lack of funds, lack of personnel made worse by the suppression of the teaching orders, lack of time as more urgent tasks stood in the way, the main one being the war to be fought, and the attendant general conscription. The teachers who remained were badly paid and often had to take other jobs to make ends meet and, like their pupils, their presence in the school was often seasonal. (We have an interesting testimony of this in a beautifully written petition addressed to the *Citoyen Ministre* by a schoolmaster in St Tropez, south of Draguignan. He had been arrested arbitrarily and thrown into jail as a deserter, as he had used his leave from army service to do some teaching.<sup>94</sup>) The result was a decline in the number of pupils and of schools. The *Enquête sur l'Instruction primaire* of 1807 shows grim results: most villages had lost their free schools when they had one.<sup>95</sup> The same villages report the new presence of *écoles particulières* however, sometimes two or three, some for boys, some but fewer, for girls; very few are mixed, very few are boarding, and most of them are open in the winter only. This flexibility of regime was probably what made them popular, together with the fact that they usually were secular, and not religious, establishments. The presence of *écoles particulières* did not prevent the fall in literacy, according to Monsieur Fauchet's precious statistics, required from all its 86

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<sup>94</sup> ADV, 1L904.

<sup>95</sup> ADV, T9-1, *Enquête sur l'Instruction primaire*.

Prefects by the Consulate, and later by the Empire; they tell us that the rate of basic literacy in the Var was one for 24 in 1789, but only one for 36 in 1800, while the rate for good functional literacy declined from one in 53 to one in 134 during the same period.<sup>96</sup>

If Napoleon had decided that primary education was a local need best left to parents and local authorities, his authoritarian interest in secondary education left lasting marks on the French educational system.<sup>97</sup> Unlike Warwick School's rather meagre number of pupils, for instance, the College had had 200 to 250 pupils in its heyday, the numbers declining drastically with the turmoils of the Revolution, but picking up again when the Old Regime College became a College again after its many tribulations. We have seen that the Republic created a strongly centralised and organised system of education to train its elites. Besides its *Ecoles Centrales*, it created Specialised Schools for higher education in 1795, the most prestigious of which were the *Ecole Polytechnique* and the *Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers*, still in existence today. This marks the real beginning of the age of meritocracy, or at least of a State meritocracy, into which the literate children of the literate classes were channelled via the 'Lycées', and a national examination, the *Baccalauréat*, which opened for them the doors to higher education or to lower administrative jobs, to a meritocracy *de jure*, so to speak. Some historians have stressed the crucial importance of the written word in the making of the Revolution, and how it has been central to the creation of the new revolutionary rhetoric;<sup>98</sup> it could be said, with caution, that one of the long lasting legacies of the Revolution was this institutionalisation of the power of the written word, as we shall see later. Now we

<sup>96</sup> *Statistiques Générales* ..., p.179.

<sup>97</sup> Taine, H., *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. 3, in his chapter 6, *L'Ecole*, gives a highly detailed, if hostile version of the Napoleonic system.

<sup>98</sup> See Lynn Hunt's chapter on 'The New Political Class' in her *Politics, Culture and Class*..., especially pp.205-236.

have a very different map of the paths to literacy, and place and status in society, from the one we have found in England, where the beginnings of a meritocracy can be found, but where one acquired a place among the elites through the more meandering way of private enterprise or precedents, as opposed to written codes and rules. Many of the social and political landmarks of changes in French society in our period have been fixed, encapsulated, by the written word: the *Cahiers de Doléances* in the Spring of 1789, the Constitutions of the Republic and of the Consulate, the Civil Code of Napoleon, as well as all the innumerable rules and regulations of a strongly centralised administration. Let us look at the *Cahiers de Doléances* again. We have said they are a landmark because, for the first time in history, the voice of the people is couched in writing; but do they express much in the way of the apprenticeship to literacy? In fact the subject of education is generally rather sparsely represented. For the *Sénéchaussée* or district of Draguignan, for instance, there are only 12 requests or complaints about education as opposed to 136 on the reform of Justice for instance, or 30 on hunting rights;<sup>99</sup> the *Cahier* of the neighbouring district of Brignoles does not even have any reference to education. Even if they are few, the references to education are extremely interesting all the same, as an expression of the people's opinion of what education was about, and because of subsequent developments. Most *Cahiers* state that the *instruction* of young people is an *objet majeur*, and this major aim is always coupled with 'the reformation of morals and manners'. This has a familiar ring, for are we not hearing the voice of the evangelising priests and Dissenting ministers whom we have already met in Warwick? And there is more: some communities in the district, like Fayence or Aups, ask for "a system of public instruction such that the youth of all the towns and villages have access to it", and Aups specifies that it should be youth of both sexes.

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<sup>99</sup> *Cahier Général des Doléances du Tiers-Etats de la Sénéchaussée de Draguignan*, Aix, 1789, and *Cahiers de Doléances des Communautés de la Sénéchaussée de Draguignan*, ed. F. Mireur, Draguignan, 1889, which are very interesting as they are the voice of the people in each village or town of the district, as opposed to the more general and uniform summary made by the district general assembly.

as “the want of instruction fosters ignorance, moral depravity, bad manners and even irreligion”. This is a precursor of Hannah More’s talk, or even that of the National or British and Foreign Societies before their time. Is it the voice of the people of Provence, or of the village priests or other already literate inhabitants who had had the privilege of a useful private education, thus explaining the paucity of references to education in the *Cahiers*? The local assemblies had a majority of peasants and artisans, but in the final instance, when it came to electing people to the general assembly of the district, it was the professional writers who were elected and in some areas only them, though in the Draguignan assembly the signatories were a more mixed bag of representatives, including traders and artisans and even land-owning peasants. On the whole, they were the respected *hommes à talents*, the skilled and educated people. The village of Ansouis in the District of Aix, for instance, wanted its administrators to be “people consumed by study, and aged at least 40” rather than the flighty and “often ignorant young nobles who have the arrogance of deciding of the fate of families, widows and orphans”.<sup>100</sup> In conclusion, we have to say that literacy had become less broad-based in our period, and was certainly affected in both countries by the upheavals of wars and Revolution, and, not least, the rise in population. The levels of literacy of the late eighteenth-century were not reached again until the 1820s and early 1830s.<sup>101</sup> Yet for those who could afford to learn the rudiments of literacy, entry into the ranks of the more prosperous classes, or at least the class of those with status by virtue of their education, was assured via the numerous academies, private schools, colleges, and *lycées*. This place in society was acquired more automatically in France than in England, however, as the State created, through its centralised educational system, the new meritocracy. The mayor of Draguignan vouched for this at the council meeting of 1 May 1806, when he deplored the poor attendance at the public library and added: “education is our most

<sup>100</sup> ADV, MI, IR1.

<sup>101</sup> Molinier, A., ‘Scolarisation et alphabétisation sous la Restauration. l’exemple ardéchois’, *Annales du Midi*, 97 (1985), pp.129-157.

precious heritage, as it corrects unfavourable conditions of fortune; when education is combined with good morals, it would be a rare thing if he who is endowed with it were not raised to a rank in Society where enlightened Virtue has the right to aspire".<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> ADV, AC D4, *Rapport du Maire sur l'éducation*.

## Chapter 3

### The word from shelf to market: a revolution in reading

#### Part 1: A general survey

In this chapter, we shall analyse the role of the written word in the formation of the new private and public sphere in the Habermas sense of both being the sphere of the private individual. We shall follow its paradoxical journey from its grounding in religion to being, by its very diffusion, the promoter and agent of the secularising individualism which pervaded our period, even or especially when claiming to be the agent of divine authority. The written word has been a major factor in the establishment of a new sense of self within society. It contributed to the formation of what Rousseau called 'common utility', a result of the expression of a common will which he foresaw as the 'foundation of civil society'.<sup>1</sup> The written word has been the agent of the change from a 'Religion of the Priest' to Rousseau's ideal of a *Religion Civile*,<sup>2</sup> and an essential component of his civil society, a society in which the individual becomes a participant through an adherence to a *civility* in which the written word has become both a norm and the vector of the norms. The commercialisation and consumption of print forged a cultural consciousness, and periodicals and novels especially helped build an identifiable audience, "a society of the text".<sup>3</sup>

As we have seen, writing has been described as a civil activity, as a technique, the apprenticeship of which was long and costly.<sup>4</sup> The *Encyclopédie* of 1776 devotes

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<sup>1</sup> *Du Contrat Social*, Paris, 1964 (first pub. 1762), p.304.

<sup>2</sup> *Du Contrat Social*, p.336.

<sup>3</sup> Klancher, J.P., *The Making of the English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832*, Madison & London, 1987, p.24.

<sup>4</sup> See the Introduction and Chapter 2.

two columns to the technical intricacies of writing, which it defines as an 'Art Mécanique'; this daunting enterprise explains the survival even to this day of public scribes, *écrivains publics*, in shops on the high streets of some French towns.<sup>5</sup> Reading, on the other hand, enjoyed a long-established and respectable status whose justification was the divine word as embodied in the Holy Scriptures. The alphabet was inseparable from the Christian creed: hornbooks, battledores, and *abécédaires* presented as first words to be learned the Lord's Prayer and lines from the catechism.<sup>6</sup> Reading holds even more than this fundamental advantage over writing, that, from the point of view of psycholinguistics at least, it is a more passive activity, the reader being only the recipient of the word. This receptive, as opposed to the expressive aspect of writing, had important consequences: it was seen as easier, therefore cheaper, to teach, and as safer, because of its religious aura. This religious aura, combined with its greater immediacy, meant that reading was always taught as an entirely separate apprenticeship to writing, if writing was taught at all.<sup>7</sup> Therefore reading was a much more widespread and 'democratic' form of literacy. Even when the teaching of writing was on offer, by the time the scholars would have been deemed ready for it, they often would have already left school. Reading also appeared safer than writing because the availability of the reading material could be under the control of established power, and used by it to contain the new desire to

<sup>5</sup> Because of the usefulness of writing, people of small means, like artisans and shopkeepers, were prepared to invest in all the tools of the art rather than in books. Parisian inventories of the mid-eighteenth century show that 60% of those owning writing tools and furniture did not possess any books; see Martin, H.-J., Chartier, R., eds., *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2, Paris, 1984-85, p.405.

<sup>6</sup> Spufford, M., *The World of Rural Dissenters*, Cambridge, 1995, pp.72-74; Neuburg, V., *Popular Education in Eighteenth-Century England*, London, 1971, chap. 3: 'The Art of Reading', pp.57-91; Furet, F., Ozouf, J., *Reading and Writing, Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry*, Cambridge, 1982 (transl., French ed. 1977), pp.182-83; Michael, I., *The Teaching of English from the Sixteenth Century to 1870*, Cambridge, 1987, especially pp.111 and 138.

<sup>7</sup> Michael, *The Teaching of English*..., p.127.



think for oneself, to be informed. This in contrast to the irrepressible liberating power offered by writing to the ordinary citizens to communicate their ideas, opinions, fantasies, and beliefs and to commit them to paper in black and white.<sup>8</sup>

By the eighteenth century, the activity of silent reading, of reading for oneself, was no longer confined to the rarefied atmosphere of the vicarage, the gentleman's library, the lady's closet, or the servant's garret. It was the time of the "emergence of texts from the library to the pocket".<sup>9</sup> Reading was made easier by the new architecture which allowed in more light, by new forms of artificial lighting, by the increasing presence of public and private spaces devoted to the pursuit, places like clubs, reading rooms, and libraries; and all of this reflected the social and economic changes of the time, marked by greater privacy in daily life together with the increasing public life of an urban environment which established itself as the promoter and consumer of culture. The *Encyclopédie* again declares that although being read to is more pleasant, silent reading is more useful; to reap its whole benefit, silence and seclusion in a *cabinet* are best.<sup>10</sup> Late seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century paintings which delighted in these new private spaces and culture of reading are a unique product of the time. This 'genre' painting, as it became known in the eighteenth century, was reproduced in the form of prints for a large and avid audience, thus showing a contemporary consciousness of the novelty of the 'freedom' of reading.

<sup>8</sup> Farge, A., *Subversive Words, Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France*, Cambridge, 1994 (transl.; French ed., 1992), p.36; Chartier, R., *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, Princeton, 1991 (transl.), p.91; or Baker, K., *Inventing the French Revolution*, Cambridge, 1990, p.188.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, P., 'Classical poetry and the eighteenth-century reader', in Rivers, I., ed. *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, Leicester, 1982, p.90.

<sup>10</sup> For a good account of these new "refuges of intimacy" and reading practices see Ariès, P., Duby, G., *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3, 'Passions of the Renaissance', Cambridge, Mass., 1987 (transl; French ed. 1986), pp.124-147 and pp.207-230.

The *Encyclopédie*'s article on 'reading' goes on to say: "Reading, however, is a pain for most men", especially "the military,...financiers,...businessmen and government ministers..." Although cheap print in the form of ballads, broadsides, chapbooks, and pamphlets had long been the 'alternative' literature of those who found reading 'painful' or too expensive (people such as the schoolboys cited by Margaret Spufford),<sup>11</sup> the eighteenth century offered the would-be reader an increasing profusion of opportunities to read through ephemeral print in the street, or the market square, or the more permanent medium of the press, including the burgeoning provincial press.<sup>12</sup> In the second half of the century, the number of readers more than doubled, retail booksellers proliferated, and ephemera became a common part of the urban environment: printed posters and adverts, handbills, tickets, receipts, theatre bills, etc.<sup>13</sup> The proliferation of reading spaces was much criticised at the time, and the danger of circulating libraries and other such "unsuitable places" was often emphasised.<sup>14</sup> These dramatic changes in the print trade started earlier in England, facilitated by the Licensing Act of 1695, but it does not mean that it was not happening in France, clandestinely on a vast scale,<sup>15</sup> though officially on a more reduced scale, until the explosion of the printed word in 1789 permitted by Article 11 on the Freedom of the Press in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

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<sup>11</sup> Spufford, M., *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, Cambridge, 1981, p.72.

<sup>12</sup> Darnton, R., Roche, D., eds., *Revolution in Print, the Press in France 1775-1800*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1989, p.96.

<sup>13</sup> Belanger, T., 'Publishers and writers in eighteenth-century England', in Rivers, *Books and their Readers...*, pp.5-25.

<sup>14</sup> Raven, J., 'Arrangements for Reading', in Raven, J., Small, H., Tadmor, N., eds., *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.175-201.

<sup>15</sup> Darnton, R., *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, New-York, 1995, pp.239-246, and 'Censorship, a comparative view: France 1789—East Germany 1989', *Representations*, 49, 1995, pp.40-60.

This chapter shows how, in both countries, religion on the one hand, with its demands and constraints, and the upheavals of the French Revolution on the other, affected the demand for and availability of the written word, and how they effected a revolution in reading. Robert Darnton argues<sup>16</sup> that the revolution in reading was not then, but much later in the nineteenth century; but he is referring to mass literacy, while what is meant here is a radical change in attitudes towards the written word, with the much greater availability and presence of the written word in people's environment, and the existence of spaces where orality was being replaced by, or put side by side with literacy. This change in attitude, which Darnton recognises in an earlier work,<sup>17</sup> was vastly influenced by Rousseau and his view on reading as an active and liberating activity. The assessment of what and how people read is difficult as so little is documented by the readers themselves, and therefore general trends only can be described. Later, we shall pay particular attention to the readers of Warwick and Draguignan. Do they fit in this remarkably changing scene of the written word, where cheap, often ephemeral print was abundantly available and where books, although still expensive, were an increasing part of the goods to be consumed by a growing section of society which appropriated them as the instruments of their social distinction?

Religion being the primal and primary source of reading in Christian societies, we shall start our exploration of the written word with it. Religion, in this domain, has performed a dual role, especially so in our period when the civil word was becoming all pervasive: religion was both restricting and encouraging, holding back and promoting, yet always wanting control over who was reading what, why, how much, and often where. For instance, if writing and accounts were to be taught at all, and she thought they should not be taught to the poor, Hannah More was adamant that they should not be taught at Sunday School for "this is a regular apprenticeship to

<sup>16</sup> Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers...*, p.219.

<sup>17</sup> Darnton, R., *The Great Cat Massacre*, London, 1984, pp.209-249.

sin", as she wrote to William Wilberforce in 1823; as to what should be read in her school, she used only "The Catechism Broken into Short Sentences, Spelling Books, Psalter, Common Prayer, Testament, Bible".<sup>18</sup> The emphasis was on what should be read rather than on how to read; indeed, reading was not taught as a skill but as a way of memorising Christian articles of faith, and useful and moral precepts.<sup>19</sup> It would seem that there were two significant contemporary assumptions made about reading. The first was the belief that the written word could influence people — this probably because of its sacred origin, as reading was primarily learnt to turn one into a good Christian; the second that there was a wider reading public than later historians have allowed us to believe, when only the strict literacy figures are taken into account. Only these assumptions can explain the enormous output of religious literature, including cheap print, which flourished in our period.<sup>20</sup>

The difference between Catholic France and Protestant Britain must be emphasized from the start. Britain's culture was considerably more grounded in individual access to the written word of the Scriptures, especially amongst the increasing Dissenting population, in contrast with France where the divine word was essentially dispensed from the pulpit, and where the Protestant minority — not even three per cent of the population<sup>21</sup> — was too small to alter this fundamental relation

<sup>18</sup> Aiken, J., ed., *English Letters of the Nineteenth Century*, Harmondsworth, 1946, pp.59 and 52.

<sup>19</sup> Michael, *The Teaching of English...*, p.16.

<sup>20</sup> For the flood of religious literature in the nineteenth century see Altick, R., *The English Common Reader, A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, Chicago, 1957, pp.99-128. He says that "religious literature was everywhere in nineteenth-century England. Tracts were flung from carriage windows; they were passed out at railway stations; they turned up in army camps and in naval vessels anchored in the roads, and in jails and lodging houses and hospitals and workhouses; they were distributed in huge quantities at Sunday schools, as rewards for punctuality, diligence, decorum and deloused heads. They were a ubiquitous part of the social landscape".

<sup>21</sup> This is an average figure for the whole of France; there were pockets of much stronger Protestant

to the Word. In Catholic France, only those who were able to read the (authorised) Bible 'with profit' were encouraged to read it, but not to interpret it, a right which belonged to the Church only; however, against this wariness *vis-à-vis* the diffusion of the Bible itself to the faithful, stemming from a counter-reformation tradition, the Jansenists defended the legitimacy of Bible reading for all. Indeed the Jansenist Abbé Grégoire recommended, in 1796, the widespread provision of Bibles in the vernacular.<sup>22</sup> In both countries, however, the competition between the Established Church and its Dissenting minorities, or between the Catholic Church and the State (and between Catholics and Protestants at an earlier period) meant that they were vying to monopolise and control the written word, as we have seen in the domain of school education.<sup>23</sup> Therefore the Catholic reluctance to allow direct access to the Bible was mitigated by its desire to spread the faith on the same ground as the Protestants, by improving literacy. For instance, it has been argued that the areas of France not touched by the Counter-Reformation were the most illiterate ones, because of the absence of Catholic educational militancy;<sup>24</sup> and then there were the areas where the Jansenist culture of individual thinking and the written word was still felt, areas such as the towns of Normandy and Provence, and of course Paris.<sup>25</sup>

Did the restrictive or moral control of the Church create the 'book on the shelf' effect? In France for instance, the survey on the use of dialects organised by the

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presence, such as Alsace, the Gard, and the Ardèche. See Mandrou, R., *Histoire des Protestants en France*, Toulouse, 1977, pp.244-45, and Lerou, P., Darteville, R., eds., *Pratiques religieuses dans l'Europe révolutionnaire 1700-1820*, CNRS Paris, 1988, p.245.

<sup>22</sup> Belaval Y., Bourel, D., *Le Siècle des Lumières et la Bible*, Paris, 1986, pp.28 and 678; Bell. D., 'Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei: Language, Religion, and the Origins of French Revolutionary Nationalism', *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), pp.1403-37.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>24</sup> Furet, F., Ozouf, J., *Reading ...*, p.182.

<sup>25</sup> Voyelle, M., *Piété Baroque et Déchristianisation en Provence au Dix-Huitième Siècle*, Paris, 1973, pp. 458 and 505.

Abbé Grégoire in the first year of the Revolution shows that there was very little reading matter on people's shelves, and what little there was had a religious content: catechisms, prayer books, hymn books, lives of the Saints, books of hours etc.<sup>26</sup> And were they read? Here, we can only generalise, as there is no way of knowing what people read, except through rare diaries or correspondence, like that of Jean Ranson, the silk merchant and avid reader.<sup>27</sup> One correspondent of the Abbé Grégoire wrote: "Country people have a taste for reading pious books and the Gospels"; on the other hand, another complained that occasionally there was an almanac or a *livre bleu* (chapbook) on the shelf and that "these people read and re-read these wretched things twenty times, and when they speak about them (which they willingly do) they recite them to you almost word for word". Roger Chartier reminds us that we have to read all these reports cautiously;<sup>28</sup> they might well be a reflexion of the correspondent's opinion rather than a true description of the state of book reading amongst country folks. Religious books were, nevertheless, top of the list of books borrowed in public libraries,<sup>29</sup> and Daniel Roche gives us figures for the Paris wage-earning and servant population's 'books on the shelf': 90 per cent of their books were religious works, and he adds that this predominance of books of piety remained constant throughout the eighteenth century in France.<sup>30</sup> Of course these being 'books on the shelf', these statistics far from reflect what people actually read. Almanachs, chapbooks and ephemera, or even novels were borrowed, passed on, split in instalments, and used as writing materials for lists and messages, paper being a rare and expensive commodity. However, Bibles and prayer books *were*

<sup>26</sup> *Lettres à Grégoire sur les patois de France (1790-1794)*, Paris, 1880 (Bibliothèque Nationale).

<sup>27</sup> Darnton, *The Great...*, p.214.

<sup>28</sup> Chartier, R., *Lecture et Lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1987, pp.230-231.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, in Rivers, *Books...*, pp.98-99; Outram, D., in *The Enlightenment*, Cambridge, 1995, p.21, says that 70 per cent of books borrowed from libraries were novels, but she surely means circulating libraries and lending libraries attached to booksellers' shops.

<sup>30</sup> Roche, *The People of Paris*, Leamington Spa, 1987, (transl. French ed. 1981) p.199.

universally high on the list in the inventories of provincial booksellers, followed at a long distance by schoolbooks and histories.<sup>31</sup> They were also frequently to be found in people's wills and inventories: in 1798, Sarah Smith, a rich Coventry widow, listed just four books in her 'Will and Testament', and these were a small Bible, Birkett's *Exposition of the New Testament*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, and a *Common Prayer Book*.<sup>32</sup> In his 'tableau' of 'Parish books', Louis-Sébastien Mercier observed that pious works were published in their thousands but that great authors could not even begin to compete with the success "obtained by the debris of the Roman Breviary or the Parisian Missal... These books are in Latin; the people do not understand them but will still buy them".<sup>33</sup>

The influence of religion on women in their role as readers merits special attention. For instance, the prototype Bible reader was shown as the father as head of the family, a role popularised by Greuze in his much reproduced painting of *The Bible Reading*, a winner at the Paris Salon of 1775; other representations were that of the father reading one of the *Death Bed Sermons*, a popular genre in the chapbook literature.<sup>34</sup> This restricted role of women was greater in Catholic France, despite the Marial tradition of the woman Mary being the keeper of the Word, communicated in the iconography of the countless Annunciations adorning the walls of churches, where Mary is surprised by Gabriel in the act of reading, often with a background of books propped up on her lectern, or on a shelf. It is not that the church discouraged women from reading; on the contrary, it saw their ability to read the catechism and other pious literature as crucial to the development of their own virtue and that of their

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<sup>31</sup> Feather, J., *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge, 1985, p.75.

<sup>32</sup> Coventry Record Office, hereafter CRO, 440/1/17.

<sup>33</sup> Mercier, L.S., *Tableau de Paris*, VI, 'Livres de paroisse', 1783, reprint Genève 1979, p.203; Mercier adds that priests always have a religious tome conspicuously displayed on their shelf, "which is all the bookseller wants".

<sup>34</sup> Spufford, *Small Books...*, p.201 and 215.

children, and so it taught them to read. But 'reading', however, was often reduced to learning the catechism, usually by rote, under the care of nuns, and separately from boys. This very restriction, nevertheless, could be said to have played in favour of women's ability to read; it gave them status for they were the ones who then went to church and coached their children in their catechism, a task for which they had to keep up their, even limited, reading ability. A rather simplistic iconography to describe the gendered uses of literacy of the period could associate the 'passive' citizens, all women, with reading, and the 'active' citizens, all of them men, with writing, but this would only mask a much more complex reality. There were many instances of men able only to sign their names but not read;<sup>35</sup> they had probably lost the knack of reading through lack of familiarity with the Holy Scriptures, and lack of opportunity. Indeed there was a trend found especially in Provence, and started before our period, for men to become increasingly estranged from the Church, while women became entrenched in their separate sphere within it.<sup>36</sup> This cultural chasm between the sexes was made wider, and remained at least throughout the nineteenth century, kept in place by the revolutionary anti-Church politics and the civil oath or abdication forced on the priests, as mentioned earlier, which met with a strong opposition from women.<sup>37</sup> In Draguignan, they organised an armed uprising in 1792 in defence of 'their' priest and 'their' church bells.<sup>38</sup> Women also generally refused to use the Revolutionary Calendar, as opposed to the Gregorian one.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Furet, Ozouf, *Reading...*, p.191.

<sup>36</sup> Vovelle, *Piété Baroque...*, p.519, says that at the end of the Old Regime, half of the women's testaments ask for a memorial mass to be said, against only a quarter of the men's.

<sup>37</sup> Chapter 1.

<sup>38</sup> Agulhon, M., *Pénitents and Francs-maçons de l'ancienne Provence*, Paris, 1968, p.229.

<sup>39</sup> Many historians have described this separation of the sexes: Vovelle, *Piété Baroque...*, pp.482-608; Ozouf, M., *Les mots des femmes*, Paris, 1995, pp.345-346; Tackett, T., *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France*, Princeton, 1986, p.175; Outram, D., 'Le langage mâle de la vertu women and the discourse of the French Revolution', in Burke, P., and Porter, R., eds., *The Social History of Language*, Cambridge, 1987, pp.120-135; Hufton, O.,



Early nineteenth century statistics show that, by mid-century, 41 per cent of girls still went to congregational schools, as opposed to 5 percent of boys.<sup>40</sup> The role given by the Churches to women as Bible and catechism readers is another argument against the validity of the already controversial and elusive ‘literacy’ figures for the time: there might well have been as many women as men who could read, though ‘reading’ for both sexes often just meant reciting by rote a few verses of the Bible or the catechism,<sup>41</sup> and the feminisation of religion in France could not but have an influence on women’s use and practice of literacy. Louis Sébastien Mercier describes his encounter in a Parisian church in the 1780s with a priest surrounded by sixty seated little girls reciting their catechism on marriage and procreation: “Oh, public education”, Mercier exclaims, “you are yet to be born!”<sup>42</sup> Back in England, this essentiality of the sacred word in girls’ education was still the norm in 1822, couched in elegant hand in the rules and regulations of the Coventry Lancastrian girls school: “No book except the Holy Scripture of the authorised version shall on any account whatever be introduced into the school; the reading lessons shall consist exclusively of extracts from the authorised version of the Holy Scripture.”<sup>43</sup>

Alongside these semi-negative effects on reading and the written word, religion had undeniable positive effects and intentions, even if the ultimate motives of the Churches were those of control and restraint. Chartier’s comments upon the religious and secular authorities’ attitude towards *la fête* could be paralleled by the attitude of

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in her chapter ‘In search of counter-revolutionary women’, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, Toronto, 1992, pp.91-130.

<sup>40</sup> Furet, Ozouf, *Reading...*, p.260; Probst, A., *L’Enseignement en France 1800-1967*, Paris, 1968, p.218.

<sup>41</sup> Neuburg, V., *Popular Education...*, pp.170-173, where he quotes a parish register of poor children showing that the figures for those who could ‘read’ were 74% for boys and 75% for girls, for the period 1769-1810.

<sup>42</sup> Mercier, *Tableau...*, VI, ‘Le Catéchiste de Paroisse’, pp.64-66.

<sup>43</sup> CRO, 495/3/1.

the churches towards the written word: they were both "a pedagogical device and a potential danger".<sup>44</sup> Compared to France, for instance, the Church of England, and especially its Puritan and Dissenting offshoots, had given the written word an even greater role. Indeed, even in our period, the written word was the accepted communicative art, as the visual arts were seen as too 'popish' for a Puritan religious culture,<sup>45</sup> while in France and especially in Provence, piety was communicated visually, displayed. Therefore to proselytise, to communicate its message in an attractive form, the Church in England made use of the written word. Sermons took pride of place as ways of religious communication where religious festivals had been pared down since the seventeenth century,<sup>46</sup> while art and processions in Catholic France were putting religion on show. Besides the main religious festivals, including those connected with the Marial cult, a profusion of festivals took place to celebrate local patron saints, even if sometimes some of the baroque pomp had been squeezed out of them.<sup>47</sup> In Draguignan, for instance, the town council has left a written description of the funeral they staged for their defunct mayor in May 1788. The main actors were the corporate bodies of artisans, the four confraternities of Penitents in their black, grey, white or blue robes, the municipal authorities in their official headgear, all the clergy, the College staff in long robes and square bonnets, professional mourners of both sexes, the poor dressed up by the town for the occasion, etc., all wearing gloves (a detail of significance it seems) and carrying black

<sup>44</sup> Chartier, R., *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, Princeton, 1987, p.31.

<sup>45</sup> Gregory, J., 'Anglicanism and the Arts: religion, culture and politics in the eighteenth century', in Black, J., and Gregory, J., eds., *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain, 1660-1800*, Manchester, 1991, pp.82-109, and Brewer, J., 'The most polite age and the most vicious', in Bermingham, A., Brewer, J., eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1660-1800*, London, 1995, pp.341-61.

<sup>46</sup> Durston, C., Eales, J., *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700*, London, 1996, pp.43-45.

<sup>47</sup> On this subject, see Vovelle, M., *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris, 1976, pp. 78-90.

crepe banners and torches.<sup>48</sup> The Revolution created its own semi-religious festivals but didn't suppress religious celebrations; it just moved them to Sundays so that, as the Bishop of the Var explained in October 1792, precious working time would not be lost, as there were few hands to till the land, most of the young men having been conscripted, yet there was more land to till because of the sale of the *biens nationaux*.<sup>49</sup> The short wave of violent de-christianisation in 1793 and 1794 substituted the *fêtes décadaires* for the Christian festivals; this wave travelled slowly to the provinces, and in the South was propagated mostly by the *Sociétés Populaires* rather than by the representatives from Paris.<sup>50</sup> The culture of festivals was maintained, only their *raison d'être* had changed. By contrast, in Warwick, we have the written word and a profusion of authors: the *British Catalogue* of books published in Warwick in our period shows that the majority of authors were clergymen: 16 out of 33 authors (49 per cent), a higher proportion than in France where Darnton<sup>51</sup> found that, on the eve of the Revolution, the clergy represented 32 per cent of the population of authors, while the Third Estate numbered 55 percent (36 per cent in Warwick) and the nobility only 9 percent (15 per cent in Warwick). Of course we are here comparing national with local figures, but these figures at least testify to the importance of a very active core of clergymen and a strong Dissenting presence for a town as modest in size as Warwick.

In Britain, the sermon had become one of the main vehicles of communication of the new forms of faith characterising the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, and was fostered by the competition between the different churches

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<sup>48</sup> ADV, BB49. The same year, 1788, the council paid three *livres* for the banners for a procession to the local Saint's shrine for the coming of rain.

<sup>49</sup> ADV, 1L 1087, *Mandement* de l'Evêque du Var, Oct 1792.

<sup>50</sup> Vovelle, M., *La Révolution contre l'Eglise. De la Raison à l'Etre Suprême*, Paris, 1988, pp.216-17.

<sup>51</sup> Darnton, R., 'The Literary Revolution of 1789', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 21 (1991), pp.3-26.

and chapels.<sup>52</sup> It developed as an art form, with its manuals and rules of religious ‘civility’; the spoken sermon reached a large audience, further enlarged and reinforced by printing, publication, advertising, and reviewing in the press; and it has been described as “the most effective means of political and cultural propaganda, giving the Church a platform to define itself against its rivals”;<sup>53</sup> John Wesley is said to have preached around 40,000 sermons.<sup>54</sup> Sermons, as we have seen, were a rich source of revenue for the churches and the local printers.<sup>55</sup> Charity schools and Sunday schools were among the main beneficiaries, as in Warwick which had the right combination of Established and Dissenting churches to be the source of many sermons, some of which even reached the national market.<sup>56</sup> Although the Reverend Field attributed the entente between the various denominations in the town to the ‘liberality’ and ‘benevolence of spirit’ of Dr Parr, a liberal Anglican,<sup>57</sup> this new entente might have been a reflection on the alliance of all Churches in their

<sup>52</sup> Bradeley, J., *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism, Non-Conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society*, Cambridge, 1990, pp.122-124.

<sup>53</sup> Gregory, ‘Anglicanism...’, p.91.

<sup>54</sup> Sambrook, J., *The Eighteenth Century, The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature*, London, 1986, p.41.

<sup>55</sup> Chamberlaine-Brothers, R., ‘Warwickshire Printers, Booksellers etc of the Eighteenth Century’, WCRO, 1990, shows that most of the local printing consisted of religious works of which sermons were about a quarter, the rest of their work is mostly ‘jobbing’: tickets, adverts, catalogues and pollbooks.

<sup>56</sup> For instance: Miller, Robert, Vicar of St Nicholas, Warwick, *Remarks upon a Letter to the Printer of the Birmingham Gazette and also upon a Letter addressed to the Inhabitants of Warwick by William Field* (the Unitarian Minister), second edition, or Boudier, J., *Duty of Honouring the King, a Sermon*, 1817. Savage, A., *A Sermon*, 1819, all printed by Sharpe the Warwick printer (British Library Catalogue 1991). We have seen in Chapter 2 how disputes raged in Warwick, in charity sermons and pamphlets, about the pros and cons of the National Schools versus the British and Foreign Schools.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 1.

appointed mission of controlling the lower classes. The vociferous and even seditious Dissenting elite of the provinces had softened their rebellious vein. at least for a while, as a result, it is argued,<sup>58</sup> of the French wars, increasing poverty, and increasing alarm amongst the propertied classes. John Brewer says that the sermon was the single most important literary form of the eighteenth century, and that three new sermons per week were published.<sup>59</sup> Sermons, were indeed a popular local produce which combined the immediacy of orality to the more remote aura of the written word. They were written to be read aloud, and away from the pulpit they were often read and re-read within small gatherings of family and friends before ending up on the shelf. James Bisset, in Leamington, forsook the pleasure of a journey with his wife to visit friends, in order to go and listen to a local charity sermon with his daughter; it might have been one of the charity sermons delivered by someone he knew well, Dr Parr, whose often controversial sermons were printed and published.<sup>60</sup> Bertie Greatheed, in Warwick, never fails to report, Sunday after Sunday, that he read a sermon or went out to listen to one and, like many other churchgoers, made notes — ‘notes on sermons’ are a commonplace item in local archives’ family papers.<sup>61</sup> France also had its sermon culture, of course, and its star preachers; the Lent sermons especially, were an occasion not to be missed. The youngest of the Caussemille sons, wrote dutifully back home from his boarding school in Lyon that he and his school fellows were taken to the Lent sermons, and each evening had to write an analysis of them. Interestingly, sermons were seen by both headmaster and pupils as lessons in rhetoric as much as religion.<sup>62</sup> These were sermons for the elite, modelled after the great preachers of the seventeenth century

<sup>58</sup> Bradeley, *Religion...*, pp.12 and 89.

<sup>59</sup> Brewer, J., *The Pleasures of the Imagination, English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. London, 1997, p.172.

<sup>60</sup> WCRO, CR/1563/246. Bisset, J., ‘Memoirs of myself written for my Grand Children’. 1818. For Samuel Parr’s sermons, see for instance BL 100d. 126 (8), or BL 2804d. 46 (7).

<sup>61</sup> WCRO, CR/1707/116-126. Journals.

<sup>62</sup> ADV, 5J8, February 1820.

like Bourdaloue or Bossuet.<sup>63</sup> There were other types preached by missionary priests, to instruct, moralise, and even terrorise the rural parishioners:<sup>64</sup> these sermons were not printed, for two good reasons which can be laid at the doorstep of the Catholic Reformation: they were often delivered in the local dialect, in order for the evangelizing impact to be stronger, and there was the perennial suspicion of the individual reader interpreting the scriptural word without the intermediary of the priest. David Bell gives us an original and detailed discussion of the impact of Catholicism on language in eighteenth-century France, where he concludes that “patois was still the language of choice for addressing the peasants on religious issues”.<sup>65</sup> Jean Ranson, in a letter to the *Société Typographique de Neuchâtel*, begs for “good new sermons”, and complains that “France has been famished for them for a long time”.<sup>66</sup> Printed sermons became scarce in the eighteenth century, while there was a boom in catechisms, books of hours, and other works of devout practice.<sup>67</sup> Religion for the masses was a culture of orality, and of texts learnt by rote, and recited rather than read.

The Church of England had popularised another form of religious literature in the form of tracts, pamphlets, and cheap Bibles distributed in their thousands by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, long before Hannah More came on the scene with her *Cheap Repository Tracts* distributed by the Religious Tracts Society. This effort in the domain of education could be described as the other positive influence of Religion in promoting the written word, even though it had

<sup>63</sup> Darnton, R., *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, New-York, 1995, p.222. quotes a contemporary testimony: “As to sermons, their sale does not amount to much. Devotional works are common...”

<sup>64</sup> Goubert, P., Roche, D., *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1984, p.66.

<sup>65</sup> Bell, ‘Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei...’, pp. 1403-1437, esp. p.1422.

<sup>66</sup> Darnton, *The Great...*, p.214.

<sup>67</sup> Quénard, J., ‘L’anémie provinciale’, Martin, H.-J., Chartier, R., eds., *Histoire de l’édition française*, vol. 2, *Le livre triomphant*, Paris, 1984, p.285.

restraining and controlling ulterior motives; and, although their first aim was to inculcate morality and religion, the Sunday Schools and the National and British Schools certainly contributed to the dissemination of the written word, even if the essential qualifications of teachers sought for the task was to be first and foremost “a Member of the Church of England, a Man of sober and religious Life and Conversation”.<sup>68</sup> The word conversation is used here in its old meaning of way of conducting oneself, of good behaviour.<sup>69</sup> In France also, polite behaviour is an important ingredient of religion. For instance, Joseph Mary Poreaux was unanimously chosen as teacher by the Villeneuve local authorities on 6 November 1808 because he was found to be able to comply with the tasks, specified in twelve articles, none of which mentions any other content to his teaching but that of instructing the children in the “first principles of Catholicism according to the catechism”, and of “keeping his hair short and clean”.<sup>70</sup> The proselytising educational activity of the Church was mostly the work of the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes*. Indeed, if many went underground during the revolutionary years,<sup>71</sup> they were back by the first decade of the nineteenth century, immediately followed by the Jesuits, rehabilitated by Pius VII in 1814. The Jesuits concentrated on the formation of elites, rather than on popular education, and with them the classical education of their Old Regime Colleges was re-established.

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<sup>68</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, 24 September 1808.

<sup>69</sup> A contemporary definition of ‘conversation’ was: “The whole course and way of Living, all the exterior management of Behaviour”, quoted by Shearer West in ‘The public nature of private life: the conversation piece and the fragmented family’, *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 18 (1995), pp.154-172, where she adds that this idea of conversation as behaviour was pervasive in the sermons delivered at the time.

<sup>70</sup> Probst, A., *L’Enseignement en France 1800-1967*, Paris, 1968, p.148.

<sup>71</sup> Darteville, R., in ‘Catéchismes clandestins’, Lerou, Darteville, *Pratiques religieuses...*, describes the missionary work carried clandestinely in the mountains of Provence, where the priests taught catechism to the children and spread religious literature, in particular J.B. de la Salle’s *Civilité puérile et honnête*, a cheap *livre bleu* version of the *Règles*.

In 1877, Alcide Bonneau reminisced: "There are few men in their thirties and forties who have not had, as their first textbook, this fifteen to twenty page booklet, bound in cardboard, which started with the vowels and the consonants, and finished with rules of behaviour; so that as soon as one was able to spell, one learnt how not to wipe one's nose on one's sleeve."<sup>72</sup> Indeed, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the traditional books of 'Civility', printed at Troyes and Rouen, already part of the charity schools' curriculum in the eighteenth century, enjoyed renewed popularity on a grand scale. *Les règles de bienséance et de civilité chrétienne à l'usage des écoles chrétiennes* became a basic school textbook again, with its popularity reaching a peak during the Empire and the Restoration, when they became "the tool of middle-class pedagogues for teaching the lower classes", where the emphasis was on the respect of the inegalitarian idea of social order.<sup>73</sup> Like Hannah More's *Tracts*, they were sold as *livres bleus* by hawkers, which probably increased their appeal.<sup>74</sup> It would appear that the proportion of 'small godly books' produced in France and in England was roughly identical; just over a third of the chapbooks sold by hawkers.<sup>75</sup>

In her pamphlet *Considerations on Religion and Public Education*, Hannah More

<sup>72</sup> Bonneau, Alcide, *La civilité puérile par Erasme, et les livres de civilité depuis le seizième siècle*, Paris, 1877, Introduction.

<sup>73</sup> Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print...*, pp.91 and 107, and for the role of *Les Règles* as primers see Chartier, *Lecture...*, pp.64-65, and Chartier, *L'Education...*, p.138.

<sup>74</sup> Nobody seems to have paid heed to the entry on *civilité* in the *Encyclopédie*, 1751-1780 ed., it says: "I have read books on civility so loaded with maxims and precepts (...) that they would make me prefer rudeness and coarseness."

<sup>75</sup> Spufford, *Small Books...*, pp.135-147, where Margaret Spufford compares a private collection, that of Pepys's to the list of *livres bleus*. We find an equivalent estimate in Martin, Chartier, *Histoire de l'édition...*, p.286 where religious works represent 36% of the *livres bleus* in the inventory of a printer from Rouen.



is very clear:

Let us in this yet happy country, learn at least one great and important truth, from the errors of this distracted people [the French]...that no degree of wit and learning, no progress in commerce; no advances in the knowledge of nature, or in the embellishments of arts, can ever thoroughly tame that savage, the natural human heart, without RELIGION.<sup>76</sup>

This is More's highfalutin style for 'Persons in the Middle-Ranks'; her style for the 'Common People'<sup>77</sup> is rather different but says the same thing:

Though I've no money, though I've no lands,  
I've a head on my shoulders and a pair of good hands  
So I'll work the whole day, and on Sunday I'll seek  
At church how to bear all the wants of the weak  
The gentle folks too will afford us supplies  
They'll subscribe and they will give us their pudding and pie.<sup>78</sup>

This exemplary labourer is one amongst hundreds of her 'common people', paragons of 'sobriety', 'industry' and 'obedience to the divine principles of the Christian Religion'. On the French side we have the following exhortation in the much duller style of a primer: "If you are poor, never forget that work is your salvation, be honest and sober, there is nothing so admirable as virtue in the bosom

<sup>76</sup> More, H., *Considerations on Religion and Public Education*, 1794. The Augusta Reprint Society, Berkeley, 1990, p.17.

<sup>77</sup> More, H., *The Miscellaneous Works*, 1, London, 1840, which are divided into her 'Stories for Persons in the Middle Ranks' and 'Tales for the Common People'.

<sup>78</sup> In Alden-Hopkins, M., *Hannah More and her Circle*, London, 1947. In 'The Hackney Coachman', *Cheap Repository Songs*, WCRO, CR 1774/file A, we find a very similar submissive contentment: "I am a bold coachman and drive a good hack/.../Tho' poor we are honest and very content/ We pay as we go for meat, drink and for rent/ To work all the week I am able and willing/ I never get drunk and waste not a shilling."

of misery, refrain from envying the rich...”<sup>79</sup> Apparently, these exhortations had some effect, reflected in the ‘industrious revolution’ which has been described as a new important corollary of eighteenth-century consumerism.<sup>80</sup> People worked harder in order to consume more.

In both Britain and France, one consequence of the Revolution was to increase the role of religion, with its moral culture of religious civility both in education, and in the stabilisation of social structures; and this even more so in Britain, where its missionary endeavours brought together all denominations. William Wilberforce, with the backing of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, put it forcefully: “The high and noble may be restrained by honour; but religion is the law of the multitude.”<sup>81</sup> Yet this proselytising activity had the effect of secularising the divine word, through the desire for it to rule civil society; the pamphlet, the tract, and the cheap Bibles made it every woman’s and man’s possession. The new language of religion, by appropriating the language of social intercourse, paid an important contribution to the culture of politeness and sensibility in its attempts at reforming manners. The sliding of religious morality into a social one, and the formation of a social ethic separate and divorced from religion, has been beautifully analysed by Michel De Certeau in his *L’Ecriture de l’histoire*.<sup>82</sup> This new language was not immune to the Rousseauiste culture of feeling and sentiment; for instance a display of

<sup>79</sup> Probst, A., *L’enseignement en France 1800-1967*, Paris, 1968, p.127. This is the second text in a reading method adopted by the Society for Elementary Education in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

<sup>80</sup> de Vries, J., ‘Between purchasing power and the world of goods’, Brewer, J., Porter, R., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, London, 1993, pp.85-121; the link between religion, industry, and consumerism is also discussed in the Introduction to Barker-Benfield, G.J., *The Culture of Sensibility, Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Chicago & London, 1992, p.XXV.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted by Wood, M., *Radical Satire and Print Culture 1790-1822*, Oxford, 1994, p.103.

<sup>82</sup> de Certeau, M., *L’Ecriture de L’Histoire*, Paris, 1975, pp.153-212.

feeling was one of the appeals of the Wesleyan approach.<sup>83</sup> The novel certainly benefited from this new religious sentimentality, and probably vice versa. In France this trend found its sublimation in the renewal of Marial activity and, as we have seen, in the feminisation of a religion deemed to belong, like novels, to the woman's realm.<sup>84</sup> The era of the part book, the *livre bleu*, the potted versions of the eternal Great Books, had come, together with the even more ephemeral words of the poster, the newspaper, the tract, the lampoon, and many more such. In France, the high point of this secularisation by and of the written word happened in 1792, with the transfer of the functions of divine scribe to a civil scribe: the recording of the vital statistics of births, marriages, and deaths to the civil domain of the town hall. This was a momentous change which was there to stay, and the symbolic significance of this passage of the word from Church to civic society has not been emphasised enough. This evolution was crowned by the Concordat of 1801 between Napoleon and Pius VII which sealed the separation of Church and State. This gave birth to the subsequent struggle between the two which has profoundly affected French political and social life up to the present day, especially in the domain of education, although Jules Ferry's secularising reforms of the 1880s did give the State the upper hand.

Finally, the secularizing of the sacred word comes not only from the profusion of texts on offer but also from the non-conforming idea of reading as an exploratory process, so that, in the end and as a sort of backlash, what remained of the text was much moralizing and less of the original Scriptures. A late eighteenth-century *Civilité* starts with this exhortation: "My dear child, learn to read well, work on it with courage in order to become a good Christian."<sup>85</sup> This is followed by rules of

<sup>83</sup> Baker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility...*, pp.65-77.

<sup>84</sup> Gibson, R. 'From God of Fear to God of Love', in Cornick, M., ed., *Beliefs and Identity in Modern France*, European Research Centre and Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France, Loughborough, 1990, pp.25-29.

<sup>85</sup> *La civilité qui se pratique en France parmi les honnêtes gens pour l'éducation de la jeunesse avec une méthode facile pour apprendre à lire, prononcer les mots et les écrire*, Orléans, (end of

behaviour in society and a list of the people to be respectful to. Another instance is William Dodderidge's *The Family Expositor*, a commentary on the Bible popular well into the nineteenth century among both Church of England and Dissenters, which contains sections on 'improvement' interspersed in the text of the Scriptures, and it has been suggested that this vogue of the moral tale and exemplary characters in fiction had their origin in the popular Bible commentaries and the parables.<sup>86</sup> Religion also shaped radical literature: in both England and France, Biblical style and the sermon form were widely used in the radical literature and oratory; after all most political publicists' education had been steeped in the Scriptures.<sup>87</sup> Many of the revolutionary publicists in France were 'constitutional' Catholic priests like Siéyès or Grégoire. Moreover, the tenets of the Christian Religion and of the Bible were used to justify the Revolution. Jean-Joseph Rigouard, 'Citizen Bishop' for the Var, sent many 'pastoral letters', 'moral ordinances' and 'mandaments' to be displayed at the door of churches and read to the faithful, all ending with the revolutionary and pious greeting: 'Salut et Bénédiction'. Some of his clergy, like the parish priest in Draguignan, went into flights of the best sermon rhetoric to prove that "the act on the civil constitution of the clergy agrees with the faith of our forefathers and with the doctrine they transmitted to us".<sup>88</sup> References to the Old and New Testaments were as widely used in the establishment of the new revolutionary virtues as references to

eighteenth century, according to a note, Bibliothèque de l'Heure Joyeuse in Paris)

<sup>86</sup> Preston, T., 'Biblical criticism, literature and the eighteenth-century reader', Rivers, *Books and their Readers...*, pp.108-121.

<sup>87</sup> Williams, G., *Artisans and Sans-Culottes*, London, 1989 (first pub. 1968), p.26. See also Bell, 'Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei', pp.1422-24. and Anderson, P., *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790-1860*, Oxford, 1991, p.42. where she argues that the culture of hedonism, religion and radicalism, shared the same moralizing as well as the desire to give pleasure and excite sensibility.

<sup>88</sup> ADV, 1L1087 and 1L1089, *Clergé Catholique*. By the oath the clergy had to "swear to diligently care for their parishioners, to be faithful to the nation, the Law and the King and to maintain the Constitution", which they do while raising their right hand.

the classics.<sup>89</sup> This transfer of the religious into the new republican culture is emphasised by Soboul in his analysis of the revolutionary festivals and ceremonies: in fact he goes further with his contention that it is the revolutionary cults which become “integrated into the traditional religion”.<sup>90</sup>

All these changes were brought about or facilitated by the commercialisation of print: the word had come onto the market place. By the time of our period, the ability to read was taken for granted by religious bodies wanting to spread the word of the Scriptures, by the secular agencies for the promotion of their political ideas, and by those with purely commercial interests. It was probably a mixture of the three which explains the vast production of printed matter which appeared on the market; the last, the commercial interest, giving the most convincing demonstration that there was, out there, a vast reading public. Those interested in the diffusion of the written word followed Rousseau in thinking that “reading is learnt naturally from the necessity to know and react to what catches one’s interest”.<sup>91</sup> In 1794, the Abbé Grégoire recommended to the *Comité d’Instruction Publique* “to spread in profusion, and above all in the rural areas, not big books, but a mass of patriotic pamphlets, full of luminous and simple notions on all subjects relating to the arts and to politics”.<sup>92</sup> In this, he was only following the techniques of the evangelical NSPCK and the radical Thomas Paine in Protestant England. Like Rousseau’s readers, the readers of newspapers, tracts, and pamphlets were directly addressed, even if the idea here was not always that of equality but rather of patronage. The French Revolution affirmed to the full the idea of a dialogic relationship with the written word, which counter-

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<sup>89</sup> Belaval, Bourel, *Le Siècle...*, pp.689-692.

<sup>90</sup> Soboul, A., *Understanding the French Revolution*, London, 1988 (transl., French ed. 1982), pp.131-144.

<sup>91</sup> Rousseau, J.J., *Emile ou l’éducation*, (first pub. 1762), Paris, 1961, p.117.

<sup>92</sup> de Certeau, M., Julia, D., Revel, J., *Une politique de la langue, la Révolution française et les patois*, Paris, 1975, p.310.

revolutionary and authoritarian efforts never entirely suppressed.

Although the apprenticeship to literacy was steeped in the Scriptures, as we have seen, the vastly expanding market for children's books in the late eighteenth century reflects first a commercial preoccupation, and also a serious educational one. The idea of play and enjoyment crept into the alphabet books, the primers and the moral tales. John Newbery in England and Pierre Blanchard in France, with his *Librairie d'Education*, were the first to create, in the late eighteenth century, this new market for attractively illustrated primers for children.<sup>93</sup> A new readership was being created, as folk tales and chapbooks were no longer considered suitable for children of the middle ranks.<sup>94</sup> The message was that reading would bring riches and status. The cover of John Newbery's very popular *History of Little Goody Two Shoes* bore the following enticement: "With the Means by which she acquired her Learning and Wisdom, and in consequence thereof her Estate..." Who were best suited than women to do the writing of this new literature? They, as guardian of Christian values, were endowed with the suitable moral authority on educational matters.

So women became writers of books for children. Yet, if we look at the statistics, it would seem that, on the eve of the Revolution, the French authors of books for children were prominently men: according to Michel Manson there were 198 male authors but only 18 female ones, and 83 per cent of them all were from the middling classes, the *Tiers-Etats*.<sup>95</sup> But statistics on gender are rather misleading because, at

<sup>93</sup> Avery, G., Briggs, J., eds., *Children and their Books*, Oxford, 1989, p.114: On Newbery's impact see Rowe Townsend, J., *Trade and Plumb-Cake for Ever, Huzza! The Life and Work of John Newbery 1713-1767*, Cambridge, 1994, and by same, *Written for Children*, sixth revised ed., London, 1995, pp.15-19.

<sup>94</sup> See Lang, M., 'Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1786): a document of social education', *History of Education*, 7 (1978), pp.21-33.

<sup>95</sup> Manson, M., *Les livres pour l'enfance et la jeunesse publiés en France de 1789 à 1799*, Paris, 1989, p.19.

that time, most women wrote anonymously or took a man's name, and because men, who found writing books for children inglorious, often wrote anonymously. Whatever the exact import of these statistics, the place that women occupied at the forefront of children's literature, especially as pioneers of the genre, is noticeable.<sup>96</sup> The French Mme Leprince de Beaumont was sometime governess in English noble families, and her serial publication *Le magasin des enfants* was very successful in both France and Britain from the 1770s onward; Mme d'Epinay was probably the first woman writer whose attitude to childhood and education was marked by the Enlightenment; and the indefatigable Mme de Genlis, of a Catholic and Rousseauist obedience, produced an enormous output of educational literature for children, and her work was also almost simultaneously translated into English, or published in French in London. In fact, the two inspirations for the literature for youth in both countries were, on the one hand, Christian values and, on the other, Rousseau. The La Rochelle merchant and Rousseau admirer, Jean Ranson, ordered from the *Société Typographique de Neuchâtel*, more books for the education of his children than belles-lettres or religious works, although these were also prominent on his list. The four main authors of books for children he chose were Mme de Beaumont, Mme de Genlis, Mme d'Epinay, and Arnaud Berquin.<sup>97</sup> Rousseau might have influenced the way people read, but his idea that "reading is a calamity" as far as children are concerned, was not heeded by authors — many of whom claimed their admiration for Rousseau's ideas — publishers, or their readers either, if one is to go by the numbers of re-editions of the most popular children's books.<sup>98</sup>

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In England, the Rousseauists were mainly of Non-Conformist background, either

<sup>96</sup> See Havelange, I., Le Men, S., *Le Magasin des Enfants. La littérature pour la jeunesse 1750-1830*, Montreuil, 1988, *passim*.

<sup>97</sup> Darnton, 'Readers respond to Rousseau', in *The Great Cat...*, pp.246-49.

<sup>98</sup> Rousseau, J.J., *Emile...*, p.115: "La lecture est le fléau de l'éducation." Rousseau might have been heeded by publishers in France, because it is not until 1810 that Pierre Blanchard became the first publisher specialising in children's books. See Havelange, Le Men, *Le Magasin...*, p.31.

Quaker or Unitarian — like Maria Edgeworth who had met Mme de Genlis, like Anna Barbauld, Priscilla Wakefield, Mary Elliot, Mrs Pilkington — while Hannah More and Sarah Trimmer were definitely identified with the Established Church. In her *Guardian of Education* of January 1804, apropos Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton*, a kind of *Emile* English style, Mrs Trimmer warns of “the danger of sowing the seeds of democracy and republicanism in the youthful breasts”, although she does admit that, “pruned of its pernicious excrescences, it might be read by children with great profit”. In the same *Guardian*, in her column on ‘Systems of Education’, she analyses some of Mme de Genlis’ educational works with guarded sympathy, while in the *Guardian* of December 1802, she criticises Maria Edgeworth’s books for their lack of Religion “which should be the cornerstone of all education”. The child was the focus for all these writers, and it remained also at the centre of the Revolution’s educational preoccupations, as a prospective republican citizen; therefore the output of children’s books increased, especially as a new language had to be taught to express the new values, the Republican catechism, the new unified system of measures, the new calendar. Indeed the disciplines best represented in this extensive production were Morality and the acquisition of language through Grammar.<sup>99</sup> These were replacing the old *Civilités*.<sup>100</sup> or rather displacing them for these soon made a comeback, although then often written by women, not by missionary priests. It must be added that the old best-sellers like *Robinson Crusoe*,<sup>101</sup> or the Charles Perrault’s stories, carried on unabated on their steady trail

<sup>99</sup> Manson, *Les livres...*, pp.29-30.

<sup>100</sup> Camille Desmoulins defending the plebeian style of the Jacobin paper *Le Père Duchesne*, said that he preferred its energetic style, which would serve the Republic, to “these *Civilités puériles et honnêtes*, these pusillanimous regulations of the monarchy”. Quoted by Brunot, F., in his *Histoire de la langue française*, 13 vols. Paris, 1947-1967, vol. 10, p.168.

<sup>101</sup> Although there was an attempt at ‘Rousseauifying’ *Robinson* with a more politically correct version under the title of *Histoire corrigée de Robinson Crusoe dans son île déserte, ouvrage rendu propre à l’instruction de la jeunesse sur l’avis et le plan de J.J. Rousseau*, Paris, Year III, quoted by



of success, despite Sarah Trimmer's condemnation of them as dangerous, amoral, and "full of vulgarities of expression...[and] horrors of imagination".<sup>102</sup> But the new literature for the youth was written specifically for them and. Rousseau permitting, not only to educate but to entertain. Some of these stories were well told: Maria Edgeworth's, for instance, were still being re-edited in our century for, she says: "To prevent precepts of morality from tiring the ear and the mind, it was necessary to make the stories in which they are introduced in some measure dramatic."<sup>103</sup> Condorcet expressed these same new preoccupations and attitudes concerning the child to the Legislative Assembly in 1791: "We will have books written [for children], books which they will read easily, and of an interest either of utility or pleasure which would encourage them to read."<sup>104</sup>

Far from being the consumers "locked into taking what was on offer rather than shaping possibilities for themselves",<sup>105</sup> women were shapers of important areas of the print market.<sup>106</sup> Women even wrote grammars, something that was hitherto considered an entirely male domain. Mrs Lovechild's *Mother's Grammar*, published in 1804, informs us of the author's theory of education: "Education is aptly compared

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Havelange, *Le Magasin*..., p.65.

<sup>102</sup> In her 'Examination of books for Children', *Guardian of Education*, January 1805.

<sup>103</sup> In The Preface to *The Parent's Assistant*, London, 1816 ed.; and see Darton, H., *Children's Books in England*, Cambridge. 1958 (first ed. 1937), p.143.

<sup>104</sup> Choppin, A., Clinkspoor, M., eds., *Les manuels scolaires en France. Textes officiels 1791-1992*, Paris, 1993, p.87.

<sup>105</sup> Davidoff, L., Hall, C., *Family Fortunes Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, London, 1987, p.445.

<sup>106</sup> As for instance *The English Catalogue of Books* "in the trade" for 1801-1836, Peddie, R.A., & Waddington, Q., eds., New York, 1963, testifies: Mme de Genlis has 29 titles. Maria Egeworth 28. Sophie Cottin 6, Mary Pilkington 21, Anna Barbauld 11, to name but a few. Cheryl Turner, in *Living by the Pen, Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1992, pp.152-211, catalogues 174 British women writers.

to a weeding hook and a hand; for this reason, if there is any vice in the soul it will eradicate it; and if there be no virtue yet in the soul, it will plant some in.” It is a grammar which addresses itself to mothers or preceptresses, which Mrs Lovechild hopes “will not be unacceptable to those ladies who are engaged in tuition”.<sup>107</sup> So here we have women producing a considerable quantity of cultural goods, seen by some contemporaries and historians as subculture, feeding the print market. This period is also marked by the beginnings of a literature written by women specifically for girls, a task accomplished earlier by priests, especially in France, and then again later, in the 1820s. In France of the 1780s and 1790s, 193 titles of books for girls were published, out of which 34 were anonymous, 78 by women, and 65 by men.<sup>108</sup> These women authors came mostly from the middling ranks, unlike their most illustrious predecessors such as Mme de Genlis, or Mme d’Epinay. This is why the importance of women for the French Republic as mothers and future mothers was consecrated in books like *Véritable instruction républicaine pour les jeunes citoyennes à l’usage des écoles nationales et des mères de famille*.<sup>109</sup>

According to Elizabeth Cook, the “transnational ideal of a literary public sphere” established through epistolarity and especially the epistolary novel, ended with the eighteenth century, but transnationality there was, well into the nineteenth century, especially in the domain of literature for children.<sup>110</sup> Women, by their creative and pioneering role in this domain, were the agents of an active exchange of educational and leisure commodities across borders, through an amazingly small and close-knit network of authors unashamedly pirating each other. Within their own stories they

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<sup>107</sup> Mrs Lovechild [ or Mrs Teachwell, *noms de plume* for Eleanor Fenn], *The Mother’s Grammar*, London, 1804, p.71.

<sup>108</sup> Havelange, *Le Magasin*..., p.24.

<sup>109</sup> By Jelalel, n.d.; another one was *Nouvelle rhétorique française à l’usage des jeunes demoiselles: avec des exemples tirés des discours prononcés à l’Assemblée Nationale et des ouvrages de Raynal, de J.J. Rousseau, de Montesquieu, de Condorcet etc.*, Paris, 1792.

<sup>110</sup> Cook, E., *Epistolary Bodies*, Stanford, 1996, pp.11 and 29.

would also advertise for each other's books: Maria Edgeworth has young Harry in *Early Lessons for Children* read "Mrs Barbauld's little books...with which Harry was very much pleased", and Mrs Barbauld, in her own *Lessons for Children*, has Mary choose Mrs Trimmer's *Natural History* as the book to read in one day, to impress her father.<sup>111</sup> It was thus that we find, among the subscribers to Berquin's *L'Ami des Enfants*, the names of Mrs Barbauld, Mrs Fenn (known also as Mrs Lovechild, or Mrs Teachwell), Dr and Miss Burney, and Hannah More.<sup>112</sup> Both *Mme de Beaumont* and *Mme de Genlis* were published in France and almost simultaneously in England, and there both in French and in translation; for example, *Mme de Genlis'* moral lessons for children, *Les Veillées du Château*, or *Tales from the Castle*, went through many editions in English between the 1780s and the 1840s. The same applies to English authoresses: the works of Sarah Trimmer, Maria Edgeworth, and Anna Barbauld were published almost simultaneously in France. They were both translated by Arnaud Berquin, himself the successful codifier of what we would describe now as middle class morality, with his *L'Ami des Enfants* which, in turn, was published in England in 1788 as *The Friend of Youth*, and in many other adaptations, without acknowledgment of authorship, such as *The Looking-Glass for the Mind* published by the Newberys.<sup>113</sup> Jane Austen is known to have already had in 1786 many of the little volumes of his works in their French version, although there is no proof that she actually read them.<sup>114</sup> In fact, the vogue

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<sup>111</sup> *Early Lessons for Children*, London, 1809, p.66; *Lessons for Children*, Edinburgh, 1840, p.160, both first pub. 1778.

<sup>112</sup> I found this precious bit of information in Christopher Holtom's *Catalogue of Children's Books of Instruction and Entertainment from 18th to 20th Century*, list 113, St Teath Cornwall, 1997-98.

<sup>113</sup> For this last detail, I am indebted to *Crossovers*, the catalogue of an exhibition devised on behalf of the Children's Books History Society at York University, 22-26 August 1997.

<sup>114</sup> Tomalin, C., *Jane Austen A Life*, London, 1997, pp.45-46. In fact, if we are to judge from the readings of young Catherine in *Northanger Abbey*, it is likely that Jane Austen preferred fiction with more mystery and wilder action.

for children's books was such that Berquin was one of the few writers of the time who could live solely by his pen.<sup>115</sup> All of this manifests a remarkable and rapid exchange of tales, and ideas about education, where the only male authors able to compete with women were Thomas Day, William Godwin, and Arnaud Berquin. Women therefore helped forge the language of the literate and reading classes through the children of both countries and through their parents, the buyers of these books. It should be added that, through their advocacy of non-analytical and good usage approach to language, women equally provided for both the language of romanticism and that of radicalism which marked the first half of the nineteenth century. This is a contribution which has been overlooked and would merit further analysis.

According to Renée Balibar in her ground-breaking historico-linguistic study of the teaching of French, it is the English and Unitarian Mrs Barbauld who was the source of the new democratic French established by the French Revolution.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, Mrs Barbauld's 'plain style' English was translated and propagated by the ubiquitous Berquin, who was sympathetic to the pedagogical aims of the Revolution. Her *Lessons for Children*, published in 1778 and then again in 1788, unsigned, was published in France in the late 1780s as *Bonjour, Charles*,<sup>117</sup> again without any reference to the name of Barbauld. Later, during the Empire and throughout the best part of the nineteenth century, *Lessons for Children* was published again and again, under different titles, usually with the mention "translated [or "imitated"] from the English of Mistriss Barbauld".<sup>118</sup> Renée Balibar's argument is that both Barbauld's

<sup>115</sup> Martin, Chartier, *Histoire de l'édition* ..., 2, p.593.

<sup>116</sup> Balibar, R., *L'institution du français Essai sur le colinguisme des Carolingiens à la République*, Paris, 1985, *passim*.

<sup>117</sup> In the *Catalogue Général de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, from 1901, *Bonjour, Charles*, n.d., is described as: "Conversations par Berquin, pour les enfants de 3 à 5 ans."

<sup>118</sup> The *Catalogue...* of the Bibliothèque Nationale lists under Berquin, for instance, *Leçons pour les enfants de 3 à 6 ans*, "ouvrage classique en Angleterre par Mistriss Barbauld", published by Blanchard and Eymery in 1812.

stories and Berquin's rendering of them, which were admittedly in a slightly more *recherché* style, were untainted by Latin Grammar; she describes them as 'monolingual', as opposed to the 'colingualism' of Latin French. Both authors had moved away from the old syllabic and analytic system of the Latin grammar to a new revolutionary syntagmatic style where words, non-abstract words, were presented in meaningful sentences which tell a story; theirs was what we would now call the 'global method'. For instance, in Part One of her *Lessons*, the mother says: "Come to mamma/ Make haste/ Sit in mamma's lap/ Now read your book/"; or: "Where is puss?/ Puss has got under the table/ You cannot catch puss/ Why do you not speak puss?/ Puss cannot speak." In Part 4, the sentences give way to a short story about little Mary who was idle with reading but repents and becomes an avid reader.<sup>119</sup> In parallel, we have the other contemporary reading methods harking back two centuries, and using the analytical parsing technique, but made attractive by illustrations and words other than religious ones. For instance, in *The Child's Easy Primer* we find an illustrated alphabet, then the usual syllables, followed by words and then "Early lessons of words of one syllable" of the type "God is love and light", or "I must not be rude or wild".<sup>120</sup> In both Barbault and Berquin, the stories are about comfortable, healthy, well-to-do families radiating peace, family harmony, and benevolence for the poor, but told in simple concrete language and about familiar daily experiences.

Britain also had its 'colingualism', and the codifiers of the language certainly used Latin as their model;<sup>121</sup> but the conflict between Latin English and English was less strong because of a much longer tradition of reading and writing in the vernacular.

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<sup>119</sup> Barbault, *Lessons* ..., 1840 ed.

<sup>120</sup> *The Child's Easy Primer, being the best Introduction to Reading and Spelling*, London (J. Catnach), 1825.

<sup>121</sup> Even Eleanor Fenn-Mrs Lovechild, could not refrain from Latin in the chapter on verbs of her *Mother's Grammar*.

due to the Protestant influence of Bible reading. Hence the immediate facility with which English women educationalists and writers seized upon Rousseauist ideas and applied them in their simple open stories, written in a simple and open style. This could be said at least for the written word, because the greater freedom offered by the English language was counterbalanced by the difference in their spoken language, and received pronunciation, or 'Standard' English became the new yardstick of distinction, as the process of standardisation involved "the cultivation by an elite of a variety that can be regarded as exclusive".<sup>122</sup> It does not mean that the conflict did not exist in England, and it is because it was felt that Joseph Priestley published his *Rudiments of English Grammar* as early as 1761, and Webster his *Dissertations on the English Language* in 1789. Both authors were against over-refinement and for the spoken language style. William Cobbett also felt the alienation of 'colingualism', and this is why he wrote his *Grammar of the English Language* "Intended for the Use of Schools and Young persons in general; but, more especially for the Use of Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices, and Plough-boys",<sup>123</sup> to enable them to "shine amongst those who are destined to root out from the minds of men the base and blasphemous notions that wisdom and talent are confined to what is called high birth".<sup>124</sup> Cobbett's *Grammar*, written for his 14 year old son James in the form of letters in the good epistolary 'feminine' style of the period, probably, to start with, because they were first intended for his daughter (who learnt very fast), and then, as he explains: "I have put my work into the form of Letters, in order that I might be continually reminded, that I was addressing myself to persons, who needed to be spoken to with great clearness."<sup>125</sup> It was sold in hundreds of thousands of copies, and went into 24 editions up to 1866.<sup>126</sup> This *Grammar*, which condemned "False

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<sup>122</sup> Leith, D., *The Social History of English*, London, 1997, p.33.

<sup>123</sup> First published in New-York in 1818, then in London in 1819. A reprint by Nickerson, C.& Osborne, J., Amsterdam, 1983, has been used here.

<sup>124</sup> *Political Register*, 34 (1818), quoted by O. Smith in *The Politics of Language 1791-1819*, Oxford, 1984, p.232.

<sup>125</sup> Cobbett, *A Grammar...*, Letter 1, p.33.

Grammar” or the pomposity and verbosity of Latin Grammar, in favour of meaning, clarity, and good usage,<sup>127</sup> probably helped forge the language of the later radicals in England, and could equally be said to have accentuated the social divide between those who had acquired public school and grammar school Latin education, and those who had only had charity or private dame school education or were self-taught. Cobbett himself tried to forestall this division by forcefully refusing to admit to a superiority of any accent. In his second letter to James, he just dismisses the subject of pronunciation in one paragraph: “It should not occupy much of your attention...It is sense, and not sound which is the object of your pursuit.”<sup>128</sup>

In Revolutionary France, Condorcet, Grégoire, Lakanal, and the Committee for Public Education were very much aware of the importance of education and of French language for all. The Committee organised a competition for the production of a grammar to be used by all the *petites écoles*, and there were many submissions but, interestingly, the choice fell on a work which had been around since 1780, Charles François Lhomond’s *Elémens de la Grammaire française*, written by a refractory priest, educated in a Jesuit college of the Ancien Regime. It was chosen because it was judged to be “simple in its method and its style; the author says only what is necessary for children and he says it as it should be said for their age”;<sup>129</sup> good reason enough for the choice, but what the Committee did not say is that its Latin part, destined for the old colleges, had just been dropped, thus making it acceptable for the new age and their democratic purposes. But here we must return to Anna

<sup>126</sup> Michael, I., ‘Hyperactive production of English Grammars, *Publishing History*, 41 (1997), pp.23-62.

<sup>127</sup> Cobbett, *A Grammar* .... Letter 24, p.152, Letter 1, p.31, Letter 17, p.101.

<sup>128</sup> Cobbett, *A Grammar*...., Letter 2, p.35.

<sup>129</sup> Brunot, *Histoire de la langue*...., vol. 9, p.355. The British Library Catalogue shows that a new edition of the *Elémens* was published in London in 1804, and a translation into English in 1816.

Barbault and Arnaud Berquin: they were read by the *allivrés*, the well-read people, who had bought their books for their children, and who had learnt codified language in their grammars. According to Renée Balibar, it is why the simple language exercises offered by *Lessons for Children* or *Bonjour, Charles* came to pave the way in France to the choice of Lhomond's *Elémens de Grammaire* as official grammar for the people.<sup>130</sup>

The result of these new attempts at creating a grammar for the people, or at least for women and children, was that Latin was relegated, or elevated, to secondary education only: it became the badge of an elite education, creating, in Balibar's words, a "mutilating monolingualism".<sup>131</sup> Indeed, the Bill of 19 frimaire an XI (10 December, 1802) stated that Latin and Mathematics were to be the essential subjects in the *lycées*, which was a way of consolidating the distinction of those who would learn a different language from that to be taught to all. One can conjecture that this was why, according to Brunot's statistics, there were more teachers for Latin than for French in the economically poor South.<sup>132</sup> Napoleon was very clear about it when, addressing himself to the *Tribunat* on 6 floréal an X (April 26, 1802), he said that learning French through Latin, and through the comparison of the former with the latter, as taught in the *lycées*, gave "an advantage easy to recognise in the style of language of those who have learnt through this method".<sup>133</sup> This is corroborated by the mayor of Draguignan in his address to the council reporting on the town's secondary school: "The principal teaching there is founded on Latin, General Grammar, and Mathematics... Education is our most precious heritage."<sup>134</sup> If we compare the careers of four cousins in the Caussemille family of Draguignan, all of them born in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and of parents who were

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<sup>130</sup> Balibar, *L'institution...*, p.215.

<sup>131</sup> Balibar, *L'institution...*, p.216.

<sup>132</sup> Brunot, *Histoire...*, 4, p.516.

<sup>133</sup> Brunot, *Histoire...*, 4, p.445.

<sup>134</sup> ADV, AC D4, Rapport du Maire, 1 May 1806.



traders — the three young Caussemille brothers who were educated in private schools, admittedly with some Latin, and their cousin Jean-Pierre Clément, educated at the town's College — we see that they followed quite different paths. The Caussemilles brothers acquired local distinction but remained traders, while their cousin who started as a civil servant in the Post Office, and wrote articles for journals, novels, and, most of all, learned works on history and political economy for which he was crowned by the *Académie Française*, finally became Comptroller and Auditor General of the Mint.<sup>135</sup>

Where or what did this surge in the consumption of the written word lead to, and did it leave a mark? The increase of literacy through the medium of Church, State, and the new entrepreneurial capitalism of print, contributed to the establishment of the 'true' public sphere in two ways which are related by their relevance to the private sphere. On the one hand, literacy helped in the spread of the idea of the useful goodness of a *social* morality which found its full expression in the ideals and the 'catechism' of the French Revolution. On the other hand, it helped establish the individualism which became entrenched in nineteenth-century society in the form, for instance, of the rise of the Family, and of the decline of the big collective festivals and of some forms of sociability as its epiphenomena. The reaction to the short-term collective excesses of the Revolution might have contributed in the long-term to the new individualism; but also Protestantism in its various forms, from Nonconformism to Jansenism even via the counter-reformation, helped put the stamp of individualism, and its companion the written word, onto the society of our period from the turn of the century. The written word which contributed greatly to the rise of privacy in the eighteenth century, as Ariès has beautifully described,<sup>136</sup> brought individualism out of the closet, so to speak, and made it public. This is the time when the private

<sup>135</sup> Reboul, M., *Notabilités varoises*, n.d, p.1519 (Bibliothèque Municipale de Draguignan).

<sup>136</sup> Ariès, P., Duby, G., *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3: *Passions of the Renaissance*, Cambridge, Mass., 1987, (transl., French ed.1986), pp.1-11.

anonymous writer became an Author, thus placing the individual into the public domain. The most widely read works of literature then were, after all, those of fiction, works which put their main emphasis on the individual. But we are talking here of a part of society only, of the new “cultural oligarchy”,<sup>137</sup> of those who possessed or borrowed books, those who were the main consumers for the booksellers and the ‘conductors’ of lending and circulating libraries, and those who were educated in colleges, *lycées*, grammar schools, and boarding schools. Those used reading as a means of policing the silent majority, trying to enforce their secular civility, sometimes under the cloak of religion, and they used religion as an agent of distinction for themselves.<sup>138</sup>

Others who had assimilated the message of the French Revolution that the private man could have a role in public politics, benefited from the revolution in reading in different ways which will bring to the fore new collective values for the rising middle-class, and also for the rising ‘industrious class’, as labourers were often called then. But that is another story already excellently told by Edward Thompson.<sup>139</sup> Such was the strength of the new cultural forces that, already in October 1819, the *Edinburgh Review* warned of the “alarming signs of the times”, that of the “unhappy estrangement” of the middle class from the lower class.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> As described by Carla Hesse apropos of the Restoration, which creates “a two-tiered cultural regime” with an uncensored elite culture and a rigorously policed popular culture, in *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris 1789-1810*, Berkeley, 1991, p.245.

<sup>138</sup> Gunn, S., in ‘The Ministry, the middle-class and the civilizing mission in Manchester 1850-1880’, *Social History*, 21 (1996), pp.22-36, describes this use of religion as an agent of distinction well, although applying it to a later period: “The significance of the ‘civilizing mission’ lay less in its efficacy in reclaiming unregenerate workers for Christianity than in its ability to mobilize wide sections of the middle class to shape both social relations and the constitution of the ‘social’ self.”

<sup>139</sup> Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the Working Class*, (first ed. 1963), Harmondsworth, 1980, pp.456-69.

<sup>140</sup> Quoted by Klancher, *The Making of the English Reading ....* p.49.

## Part 2: A revolution in reading in Warwick and Draguignan?

As for everywhere else, gauging what and how people read in Warwick and Draguignan and how they read it is not an easy task. It is a much different enterprise from that of describing what people had on their shelves, but we can at least find if the general trends of the culture of print affected these two towns. Diaries and letters are rather silent on the subject of books bought, or borrowed, or read. However, as we shall soon see, the diaries of the country esquire Bertie Greatheed give us precious information on the state of reading in the Warwick area, as he was part of the local circle of ‘intellectuals’<sup>141</sup> and, as such, was in regular, sometimes daily, contact with them. From the entries in his diaries, we can reconstruct a network of activities centred on the written word: discussing, reading aloud with a circle of friends, lending and borrowing, and letter-writing.

The market place for print was important in Warwick, a market town with a licence to hold twelve fairs throughout the year, with a racecourse and a theatre open during the races; and so it offered plenty of opportunities for the diffusion of information and literature. These events were the occasions of reading notices, handbills, placards, broadsheets, lists, catalogues, adverts, or buying chapbooks, ballads, and other popular literature. For instance, some of the seven million tracts of Hannah More’s *Cheap Repository of Moral and Religious Tracts*, published in 1795, reached Warwick (in fact, the local archives do hold a few) — as must have the flood of Jacobin and Paine literature distributed, like Hannah More’s, by an army of 20,000 hawkers.<sup>142</sup> Chapbooks and ballads were mostly printed locally, and Warwickshire was well provided. Besides Birmingham and its fifty presses involved

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<sup>141</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>142</sup> Pedersen, S., ‘Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), pp.84-113.

at different times in the printing of ballads, there was Banbury the broadside and ballad printing bastion, Coventry where John Luckman, owner of the *Coventry Mercury*, and his successors, like John Turner, were among the main providers of ballad sheets, as well as Makepiece in Southam in the 1800s, and the local and far from anonymous author of ballads, the irrepressible James Bisset of Leamington, to which he moved after starting his career in the 1790s in Birmingham.<sup>143</sup>

So there was no lack of opportunities — after all, there were more than thirty victuallers in the town, more than any other traders, who also offered an ideal place for the display and reading of the written word. The Woolpack Hotel and the Black Swan, for instance, must have been active centres for the diffusion of ephemera, the one because of its function as the town post-office and meeting place for the members of St Mary's 'Select Vestry' members,<sup>144</sup> and the other because it was the regular haunt of the local Whigs and Reformists, "where all the evil political schemes were concocted against the Castle and its good supporters",<sup>145</sup> and where James Bisset sang some of his ballads to his friends. John Huston, innkeeper at the Black Swan, collected all the electioneering ephemera which circulated in his house and, thanks to his commonplace book, a good sample of them has survived, all printed by Sharpe the Warwick printer.<sup>146</sup>

The style was virulent, and a testimony of the clash of cultures: the Castle Tory culture and the more literate Reformist, Whig as well as radical culture. A handbill of May 1796 takes up a recurring Loyalist theme: "A Hound called Candidate has been lost from the Democratic Jacobin Pack...a Crop is the most Independent Creature in

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<sup>143</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>144</sup> WCRO, DR 133/42, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Select Vestry, 1819.

<sup>145</sup> According to a handwritten note by someone in the Castle who had got hold of the collection: Handbills, WCRO, CR1097/330.

<sup>146</sup> WCRO, CR1097/330.

the World, as he stands in need of no King, no Parliament, no Law, no Religion, no Church...perfectly qualified for Sedition, Treason, Rapine and Blood.” Occasionally the Crop changes into a “Pestilential Reptile full of the venom of the rankest Democratic and Jacobine Principles”. The ‘Jacobins’ seemed to favour a more restrained and dignified style, sometimes parodying the language of the Bible, a device prefiguring by twenty years the style which sent William Hone to prison, accused of blasphemy.<sup>147</sup> In another handbill, Bertie Greatheed replies to the ‘Hound’ abuse by declaring his opposition to Slavery, the War and Bigotry, a true political manifesto unique in the handbills of the local and parliamentary campaigns in Warwick during our period. Over the years the style and tone of the handbills changed: a ballad in support of Tomes the pro-Reform candidate, probably written by his friend James Bisset, used the rather simple and direct refrain “Our Town, our Trade, and Tomes for ever”. But the Old Testament style was also used in a long and beautifully printed (by Sharpe) attack in two ‘chapters’ against the Castle and “his Slaves and Sycophants”, the “Poison” of which is denounced by the opposition: “Blush, Blush, to see the Bible made the Tool, to serve a purpose — or to please a Fool”.

We have knowledge of the existence of 12 printers, booksellers, and stationers who established themselves in Warwick in our period, but it is only from 1784 that it became a town with full printing activity.<sup>148</sup> Later, the 1798 “Bill For Preventing the Mischief arising from the Printing and Publishing of Newspapers, and Papers of a like Nature, by Persons not Known; and for regulating the Printing and Publication of Such Papers in other Respects”, and the Seditious Societies Act of 1799, meant that a national register of presses had to be kept. For Warwick, we have 13 Printers’ Notices between 1799 and 1852; of course there must have been more, because not

<sup>147</sup> For William Hone’s style, see Smith, O., ‘The power of the press and the trials of William Hone’, *The Politics of Language 1791-1819*, Oxford, 1984, pp.155-201.

<sup>148</sup> Chamberlaine-Brothers, *Warwickshire Printers...*; Mitchell, C.J., ‘Provincial printing in eighteenth-century Britain’, *Publishing History*, 21 (1987), pp.5-24.

all printers bothered to register. The longest established and most active printer in our period was John Sharpe, who was succeeded by his son Henry Sharpe who founded the *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser* in 1806. As in France, provincial printing in our period was of works of a traditional kind and of local interest: bills, tickets, administrative formulas ('jobbing works'), almanacs, ballads, guides, works by local antiquarians, etc. Works by known Dissenters, like the Warwick Unitarian minister William Field, were exceptions to this rule: they could have a national market although they were firmly established in the provinces.<sup>149</sup> It is the Sharpes therefore who printed a poem by the Warwick-born poet Walter Savage Landor, as well as *The Chymical Analysis of the Leamington Waters*, William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, the official county papers issuing from the expanding administration, sermons by local ministers, and some of William Field's works.<sup>150</sup> The Sharpes do not seem to have touched the local trade in popular culture, except for electioneering ballads and posters; they were too near the big publishers of chapbooks and ballads of Birmingham and Coventry for this. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, bookselling in the small market towns of the South Midlands seems to have been far less important than the sale of stationary, and Samuel Clay, one of a family of stationers in Daventry, established in Warwick in the 1770s, must have done very well, selling his reams of white foolscap and folio paper, the most popular in the legal community.<sup>151</sup> Both John and Henry Sharpe make a regular appearance in the 'Money Orders' of the Quarter Sessions Minutes Book: John was paid £7.0.9 in 1789 "for Books and Stationary for the Use of the County"; in 1808, Henry was paid

<sup>149</sup> Feather, J., *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge, 1985, p.118.

<sup>150</sup> *British Library Catalogue of Books published before 1975* (CD-ROM). Online Computer Systems Inc., 1991. It lists 29 works printed in Warwick between 1780-1820. Of course this does not include tracts, bills, tickets, adverts, etc...which represent the main bulk of provincial printers' activity.

<sup>151</sup> See Feather, J., *The Provincial Book Trade...*, p.204.

£21.1.6 “for Printing and Stationary Goods”.<sup>152</sup> In the early 1800s, the number of printers and booksellers in the area increased. The Perry brothers moved from Stratford-on-Avon to Warwick Market Place, where they also ran a circulating library.<sup>153</sup> The increase was especially significant in Leamington and Birmingham: In 1799, Warwick had one printer, Leamington none, and Birmingham twelve; by 1828, Warwick had five, Leamington four, and Birmingham thirty three.<sup>154</sup> What we get from these figures is the rapid growth outside Warwick of the new leisure culture in Leamington, where the number of printers and booksellers will go on increasing while Warwick stagnated.

By the first decades of the nineteenth century, there was an outpouring of radical newspapers, before and after the Stamp Act of 1836. It was the *Warwick Advertiser* which put Warwick on the map of provincial printing in 1806, although Warwickshire already had a well established press with the *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* and the *Coventry Mercury*. It was a newspaper of Whiggish tendencies which came out every Saturday, until sadly it faded away in the 1980s. Like most provincial newspapers of the time, it probably reached a wide area; they were a medium for disseminating information cribbed from the *London Gazette*, which was sent three times a week to the provinces and which was full of news from abroad cribbed, in turn, from the French-language Dutch newspapers. Like the national newspapers, the *Advertiser* had the format imposed by the 1725 Stamp Act: four sheets and four columns. In fact, it conformed to all the canons and formats of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century press,<sup>155</sup> and, unlike its predecessors, it was a full blown vehicle for advertisements from the very start. First and foremost, it

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<sup>152</sup> WCRO, CR39.

<sup>153</sup> Morgan, P., ‘Early booksellers, printers and publishers in Stratford-on-Avon’, *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 67 (1947-48), pp.55-70.

<sup>154</sup> Morgan, P., *Warwickshire Printers Notices 1799-1866*, Dugdale Society, London, 1970, p.21.

<sup>155</sup> Black, J., *The History of the Press in the Eighteenth Century*, London and Sydney, 1987, esp. pp.280-290.

advertised for the goods sold by its printer and editor. Henry Sharpe: books, magazines, and medicines which made front page news. Then there were the advertisements and information for local traders and manufacturers, farmers, educationalists, the providers of entertainments such as the races, the theatre, and the lotteries; and an occasional fashion page catered specifically for women. In his editorial of January 1807 Sharpe addressed himself to “The First Families, Inhabitants and Lawyers” (some of those coming from out of county for the Assizes), but later, in 1809, there is a democratic shift in his style to “The Public” and, in 1815, to “His Readers”. He wanted to reach out those who live out of town and made special addresses to that part of the Public made of “Breederers, Growers, Noblemen and Gentlemen of landed Property, Occupiers of Land etc.” (January 1809). The *Advertiser*, therefore, was fully participating in what has been called ‘the Age of the Provinces’,<sup>156</sup> when the provincial press flourished and became more independent, thanks to their advertisements, and often more radical. Its first issue, on 4 January 1806, opened with a piece of enthusiastic propaganda for itself under the title ‘Rhapsody on Newspapers’, prompted by a debate in Parliament on the imposition of an additional tax on newspapers. Are newspapers a luxury or a necessity? he asks his readers rhetorically, and is in no doubt of their answer: “They are among the necessaries of life” and their absence would create an “intellectual famine”, “a dearth of conversation.” The tone was set through his columns: the readers will be able to be active participants in the world of commerce, in all its meanings of exchange of ideas, of information, and of goods; they will be participants in the formation of public opinion, they will be the public — hence the epistolary, confidential style of its advertisements.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Feather, *The Provincial...*, p.124.

<sup>157</sup> For instance, in the *Advertiser* of 7 April 1810, a ‘Letter to the Editor’ is in fact an advertisement for the treatment of scurvy. Robert Darnton in *The Business of Enlightenment, A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie 1775-1800*, Harvard, 1979, p.259, remarks on this “casual, epistolary style of eighteenth-century journalism”, on “the air of confidentiality of many journals”.



Advertisements for books in the *Warwick Advertiser* — Henry Sharpe was after all both its editor and the town's bookseller — were numerous, and local works, such as the treatises on the waters of Leamington Spa, or Mrs Prickett's novel *Warwick Castle* were well advertised.<sup>158</sup> One presumes that these books were read avidly by the local readers. However, the advertisements for schoolbooks had the lion's share on the front page of the newspaper. 'Valuable schoolbooks', 'useful schoolbooks', 'popular schoolbooks', or 'superior schoolbooks' were on offer: the *Young Ladies New Guide to Arithmetic*, *Essays on Rhetoric*, *The Palace of Truth* ("an admirable moral tale translated from the French of Genlis"), *French Manuals*, *Natural History Manuals*, *Surveying Manuals*, *Sermons*, *Reading Exercises*, and, above all, *Grammars*, grammars galore. It was no accident that these advertisements for schoolbooks often appeared in January, when they figured side by side with the advertisements announcing the opening or re-opening of schools. What this publicity shows is the measure of the considerable size of the consumer's market for education, and the extent to which education had become the domain of private enterprise and private initiative.<sup>159</sup>

There were other occasions for reading, as new spaces for such activity were being added to the services offered by the late eighteenth-century urban setting: book-clubs, reading rooms, gentlemen's libraries for professional men and their wives, subscription libraries, especially in the North and the Midlands where the Dissenting influence was the strongest, and where the circulating libraries greatly contributed, more or less exclusively and cheaply, to the diffusion of the 'lighter' kind of literature.<sup>160</sup> By 1800, there were one thousand of them in England, mostly attached to bookshops. Fiction represented 70 per cent of their stock with, until then, a "total decline of the unsentimental tome", and a "massive indifference to countries other

<sup>158</sup> *Warwick Advertiser*, 15 February 1806, and 8 april 1815.

<sup>159</sup> For instance, *Warwick Advertiser* of 24 Jan 1807, 9 Jan 1808, Jan 13 1810, 2 Jan 1819, etc.

<sup>160</sup> Kelly, T., *Early Public Libraries*, The Library Association, London, 1966, Chapter 6.

than England” and to a class other than the gentry.<sup>161</sup> The enterprising booksellers kept their stock up to date and advertised in the local press, and so did the publishers who were well aware that the circulating libraries were a good outlet for their expensive ‘three decker’ novels.<sup>162</sup> In Warwick, a Public Library was created by subscription and opened in 1792 on the Market Square, and there were a hundred subscribers by 1815. William Field, one of the founder members — following the example of Joseph Priestley who was one of the founders of the Birmingham Library — described it as offering a collection of books “now considerable and, upon the whole, well chosen, consisting chiefly of works in the various branches of modern literature”,<sup>163</sup> so not a traditional and austere stock like that of Draguignan’s Library, as we shall see. For the happy few, there was access to private book clubs or to private libraries, like the Catholic Lord Dormer’s;<sup>164</sup> most members of the clergy, such as Dr Samuel Parr, had equally well furnished ones.<sup>165</sup> Usually, Sunday schools had their own small libraries too, and many authors wrote especially for the Sunday school market; for example James Bisset, who, before he came to Leamington, wrote his widely published *The Converts, a moral tale, recommending*

<sup>161</sup> Gregory, P., ‘The Popular Fiction of the Eighteenth-Century Circulating Libraries’, PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1984, esp. pp. 34, 90, 158, 200. For a history of circulating libraries see Hamlyn, H., ‘Eighteenth-Century Circulating Libraries in England’, *Library*, 5 (1946-47), pp.197-222.

<sup>162</sup> The *Warwick Advertiser* of 8 December 1810 gives notice to the ‘Conductors of Circulating Libraries’ that “Today is published a Novel in 2 volumes: *Henry and Isabella or the Reverses of Fortunes*, also new editions of *Grandison*, *Pamela*, *Clarissa* etc.”. And one of the characters of Kate Thomson’s novel, *Constance*, London, 1833, set in Warwick in the 1790s, is described as a “pretty accomplished woman of thirty, who patronised the circulating libraries”, p.69.

<sup>163</sup> Field, *An Historical....*, p.83.

<sup>164</sup> He had an especially rich collection of books on France and Italy, of classical authors, and authors of the Enlightenment, WCRO, CR895/ 49, Inventory and catalogue of library, 1819.

<sup>165</sup> He had well over 10,000 volumes in his library, a *Catalogue Raisonné* of which was published after his death. Field, *Memoirs....*, 1, p.189.

*the Practice of Humanity, the Utility of Sunday-Schools and a Due Observance of the Lords Day*.<sup>166</sup> From the early years of the nineteenth century, there was a Newsroom in the main street where people could read newspapers and notices, probably run by Henry Sharpe the printer and bookseller. Later, in the *Warwick Advertiser* of 4 January 1817, Heathcote the printer and bookseller on the Market Square “respectfully informs” the public that “he has opened a commodious ROOM in which are received two Daily London Newspapers, with the *Warwick Advertiser*, *Birmingham Gazette*, *Liverpool Mercury*, the *London Price Current*, and several Periodical Publications. Terms of Subscription one guinea per year. Rooms open to Subscribers from ten in the morning until Eight in the Evening”. In his *Descriptive Guide of Leamington Priors*, James Bisset advertised his very own “Ladies and Gentlemen’s Reading and News Room”, as well as Mr Olerenshaw’s and Mr Perry’s Rooms, both of them combined with circulating libraries, as befitted a Spa town in the making.

Magazines and novels were very popular among women of the middling classes, especially widows and spinsters who were mistresses of their budgets, and this readership cut through class lines — but though male readership of fiction was still superior, according to booksellers’ records, there is no knowing whether their subscriptions were taken on behalf of their wives.<sup>167</sup> There were many widows and women of property in the town,<sup>168</sup> and we can assume that they were avid readers of fiction. Other readers most probably came from the population of artisans and

<sup>166</sup> Birmingham, 1802.

<sup>167</sup> Fergus. J., ‘Women readers of prose fiction in the Midlands 1746-1800’, *Transactions of the Eighth International Congress on the Enlightenment*, The Voltaire Foundation, Oxford, 1992. pp.1108-12.

<sup>168</sup> As the town directories indicate, as well as the maps of Warwick showing occupancy and property ownership in the town; in 1806 for instance, there were 42 women of property owing 65 properties.

traders, who formed about fifteen per cent of the inhabitants in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and probably more earlier. They had to be literate, and certainly numerate, and they most probably were, given the education facilities in the town which catered for about that number. After all, those who went to the charity schools were chosen by the churchwardens of each parish and by the boards of Trustees of each charity, and those nominated were unlikely to be the sons of the labourers or the paupers, although we have seen that even those were, to a limited extent, catered for. It is likely that, in the charity schools and Sunday Schools, children had access to Sarah Trimmer's *The Charity School Spelling Book*, with its edifying and often attractive 'Short Stories for Good and Bad Boys' (or 'Good and Bad Girls') 'in One Syllable Only', where edification runs from precepts like "The Girl spins fine yarn, the Boy heads pins well", to gory tales like the one of the bad girl who lost her leg, before she became good.<sup>169</sup> They might also have had access to William Godwin's, Maria Edgeworth's, or Thomas Day's highly successful books for children, although they were condemned by Sarah Trimmer and the anti-radical press as irreligious and Rousseauist, as we have seen earlier.<sup>170</sup> In *The Guardian of Education*, Mrs Trimmer criticized Day's *Sandford and Merton* for presenting "the danger of sowing the seeds of democracy and republicanism in the youthful breast...if he had not talked of the Gospel, we should have supposed that he had adopted, in a great measure, the system of Rousseau".<sup>171</sup> In spite of the remarkably increased production of children's books in our period, Bertie Greatheed, in Warwick, was at a loss as to what to give to his well-educated seven-year-old grand-daughter who was reading aloud *The Voyage of Colombus* to her grand-parents: "It is hard to find reading of any solid kind fit for her age."<sup>172</sup> He was obviously wary of the new capitalism of

<sup>169</sup> Mrs Trimmer, *The Charity School Book*, London, 1805, British Library.

<sup>170</sup> Avery, Briggs, *Children...*, pp.168-69.

<sup>171</sup> *The Guardian of Education*, January 1804, 17, vol. 3; in *The Guardian of Education*, December 1802, 8, she criticises Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, for the absence of Religion which should be "the cornerstone of all education".

<sup>172</sup> Greatheed, Bertie, Journals, WCRO, CR1707/120, 30 March 1812.

print and its literature especially written for children.

What the diaries of Bertie Greatheed show us is that he read everyday, by himself, or to or with his wife or granddaughter, or a circle of friends. Unfortunately he does not always tell us what he read: "I read in the morning before breakfast" is a frequent entry. Of course many of his friends did not have the leisure that he had, those like the Parkes who were busy manufacturers, or Tomes the banker. His taste definitely leant towards the classics, but that mostly when he read alone. In company, he read contemporary novels like Miss Hamilton's *The Cottagers*, or Maria Edgeworth "to the great appreciation and amusement of my guests", or Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which he describes as "jargon".<sup>173</sup> It is likely that he borrowed the novels from Henry Sharpe, or from the Perrys' circulating library, or even from the Public Library to which he must have been a subscriber. Greatheed and his wife also read the press regularly at home, at friends' houses, and probably in Sharpe's newsroom in the High Street: he mentions *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Quarterly Review*, *The Edinburgh Review*, and *The Star*.<sup>174</sup> He read poetry, especially Italian, travel books, and plays: French and contemporary English, such as Sheridan and of course Shakespeare, whose revival was beginning in the first decades of the nineteenth century, especially in the Midlands because of the Stratford connection. As we shall see, James Bisset of Leamington participated actively in this revival of Shakespeare, and in the Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare Festival. This is also when the Perrys started running their Shakespearian circulating library.<sup>175</sup>

Those who read, like the Bissets, the Caussemilles, and their friends, were

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<sup>173</sup> Journals, 16 March 1812, 19 September 1816, 6 December 1805.

<sup>174</sup> See for instance Journals, 29 November 1805, 5 May 1816, 9 December 1816, 26 June 1817, 24 Feb 1818.

<sup>175</sup> Morgan, 'Early booksellers...'

participants of the culture *sans frontières* of the book. This is why, as we shall see in later chapters, they protested against restraints in communication through blockade and the politics of war, the poor state of the roads, and of the postal service. The local libraries and Reading Rooms, however, could boast, in the columns of the *Warwick Advertiser* of 21 May 1814, of possessing “French and English books for the Nobility and Gentry”, as also did the Draguignan *cabinet de lecture*. The circulation of all this printed and written material was facilitated by the development of the Postal Service in Warwick in the early years of the nineteenth century, as in other parts of the country, in response to the increase in trade, administration, political activity, better communications, and the wider uses of writing and print. In 1807, a mail coach began to run between Warwick and Daventry; from July 1808, a mail service to and from Birmingham ran four days a week, from the Woolpack Inn where the Post Office was established and where a Nathan Sugar Baly<sup>176</sup> was both the inn-keeper and the post-master at the turn of the century. From April 1809, a service ran every afternoon to London and Birmingham, and from August 1818, a direct mail arrived before 10 am from London. There was also a service to and from Coventry and the eastern parts of the country, and communications by coach and waggon to places like Leicester, Gloucester, and Bristol. All this thanks to Warwickshire roads which, by then, were “remarkably good”, “some of the best in the kingdom”, according to our enthusiastic Reverend Field, who liked to tour about the countryside.<sup>177</sup> However, the circulation of mail was sternly overseen by the General Post-Office: on 21 April 1810, the *Warwick Advertiser* published His Majesty’s Post Master General’s warning “against unlawfully sending, carrying and conveying Letters... Under this Law a Person carrying a Letter may inform against a Person sending one... Due Encouragement will be afforded to Persons who shall give Information”. The Post was essential to the lives of the writing classes. This is why James Bisset campaigned throughout his time in Leamington for a better postal

<sup>176</sup> His picturesque name obviously took the fancy of the *Universal British Directory* of 1793-98, where he is listed as Nathaniel Shugar Baby!

<sup>177</sup> Field, *An Historical...*, p.50.

service there, independent from Warwick and therefore cheaper. To that effect he had a correspondence with the Postmaster General, Francis Freeling, and he honoured the founder of the Leamington Post Office, Ben Satchwell with a paeon to him and his daughter, his successor, whose services to the town he felt had not been recognised.<sup>178</sup>

As we have seen, Draguignan was very much part of the tradition of 'urban boroughs' as described by Vovelle,<sup>179</sup> with an active public social life. It was a place very much like Warwick, where the reading classes lived, from the nobles, bourgeois, and professionals down to the artisans and shopkeepers — and all others who might read and/or listen. What did people read in the way of books? Draguignan was a religious town and, with its nine convents, albeit in decline by our period, there must have been plenty of the basic religious books available. The College Library, run by the *Frères Doctrinaires* and well-supported by the town, was open to the public, and we know some of its content by the rather summary inventory made in 1792 according to the guidelines of the *Comité de Salut Public*. It shows the dominance of religious and theological works, followed by 151 volumes of *l'Encyclopédie*, and a ragbag of 661 volumes described as "sermonary works and other good and bad books".<sup>180</sup> As it is unlikely that the latter are the '*mauvais livres*' as defined by the pre-revolutionary censorship, it is more probably a Jacobin definition whereby the '*mauvais livre*' contains the "poison of mysticism, theology and feudality" which, nevertheless, had to be kept as testimony of corrupt times.<sup>181</sup> One of the big tasks of the revolutionary *Comité d'Instruction Publique* was to make available the content of all clerical and noble libraries to the citizens, including

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<sup>178</sup> Bisset, J., 'Life of Benjamin Satchwell', WCRO, CR1563/261.

<sup>179</sup> Vovelle, 'Midi Rouge et Midi blanc', *Provence Historique*, 36 (1987), pp.340-43.

<sup>180</sup> ADV, 1L1149, *Affaires ecclésiastiques*.

<sup>181</sup> Froeschlé-Chopard, M.H., 'Les Jacobins et les livres', *Les Jacobins du Midi*, Commission Régionale d'histoire de la Révolution française Languedoc-Roussillon, 1990, pp.15-49.

paintings and other objects related to the sciences, the arts, and education. This decree was followed throughout the revolutionary years by hundreds of decrees and letters from Paris to the provinces, together with pamphlets giving precise and detailed advice on how to catalogue and conserve books, manuscripts, and artefacts. A pamphlet of Year II (1794) entitled *Instructions sur la manière d'inventorier et de conserver*, says that "Never was a grander spectacle offered to the eyes of a nation: all these precious objects which had been kept away from the people, or which were shown to them only to dazzle them from afar, all these riches belong to them, and from now on they will be used for their instruction".<sup>182</sup> Such opening of the Pandora's box of books, objects and '*arts de l'histoire*' (a new term to describe the *beaux-arts*, and found to be less insulting to the mechanical arts) to the public took time, and was attached to the creation of the *écoles centrales*. But most of the time, these treasures, although duly inventoried, lay hidden in boxes, awaiting less busy times. Under the consulate, the interest in public libraries flagged, but fortunately Monsieur Fauchet, the first Prefect of the Var at Draguignan, seemed to have had a dynamic belief in public education, as we have seen. He saw that a Public Library was created from the books belonging to the College and to the *émigrés*, with a *Musée* and a *Jardin des Plantes* attached. According to Aubin-Louis Millin, a learned traveller visiting Draguignan in 1808, "Fauchet himself hand-picked the books which are now the ornament of the library", and he especially remarked on the presence of works in Greek and Latin.<sup>183</sup> It is likely that, because of their origin, the revolutionary and early nineteenth century public libraries had an *Ancien Régime* quality to them,<sup>184</sup> although the Paris Convention would recommend books they approved of, and even buy them for the local authorities for inclusion in their public libraries.<sup>185</sup> So the Revolution paved the way to a wider access to books.<sup>186</sup> Even

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<sup>182</sup> ADV, L911.

<sup>183</sup> Millin, A.L., *Voyage dans les départements du Midi de la France*, Paris, 1808, p.31.

<sup>184</sup> Like the one in Grasse in the Var Department, as described by Froechlé-Chopard in 'Les Jacobins...', p.44.

<sup>185</sup> Like Plutarch's abbreviated *Lives of Illustrious Men*, the first volume of which was sent to



before this, Provence was a good place for those who could afford to buy or borrow books, as it was one of the areas outside Paris which had many printers and booksellers, especially along and around the Rhône valley, in Lyon, Aix and above all Avignon, still a papal town and therefore not under the restrictive rules of Paris until the Revolution.<sup>187</sup> Like Monsieur Caussemille, traders in Draguignan moved about the county and even outside it, to Aix, Marseille, Lyon, Beaucaire, to the big fairs and to see their clients. These movements would give them the opportunity to buy or order books; or they asked those who travelled to buy them for them: Monsieur Caussemille asked his young brother-in-law, a medical student in Paris, to get him a *Universal History* and a *History of England*.<sup>188</sup>

It is likely that Monsieur Fabre, the local printer and bookseller, had a lending system or a *cabinet de lecture*, but it is not until the early 1820s that we have evidence of one in the town: Monsieur Hilarion Sery's *Lending Library Catalogue*<sup>189</sup> advertised an impressive list of novels (over 150), all three or four 'deckers', followed by classics of literature, especially poetry, children's books, the complete works of Madame de Genlis, history, letters, and memoirs. This is therefore a very polite library, one more likely to appeal to the expanding class of traders and land owners in the town than the Public library, with its much more traditional *Ancien Régime* stock; in order to cater for every taste, however, the catalogue opened with a reassurance to the readers that they will find "a complete assortment of pious works"<sup>190</sup> together with office stationary and drawing requisites".

the provinces by the Finance Minister as "the best book to be put into the hands of the young". ADV, L911.

<sup>186</sup> It was not always succesful, the mayor of Draguignan complained on 1 May 1806 that "The Library, although now open everyday, is poorly frequented". ADV, D4. *Rapport du maire*.

<sup>187</sup> Quéniard, in Martin, Chartier, eds., *Histoire de l'édition...*, pp.282-301.

<sup>188</sup> ADV, 5J1, 9 Nov. 1818.

<sup>189</sup> Bibliothèque municipale de Draguignan.

Paris had its circulating libraries and *cabinets de lecture* before the provinces, and British provinces before French provinces, but when Draguignan started, it did it with a flourish of all the *à la mode* books, including the latest novels by Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper. The important place of the children's books in the catalogue is worth a special mention here, as it offers not only Madame de Genlis's educational works, but also the 24 volumes of Berquin's *L'Ami des Enfants*. It shows that politeness is seen as the best for children. Berquin's stories have been described as "the hidden curriculum of class relations" through their simple tales of the deserving poor and the charitable rich which "inculcate politeness in the children of the affluent,"<sup>191</sup> very much in the style of Sarah Trimmer's children's stories. The prospectus sent in Year III by Devaux and Patris, Paris booksellers and printers, to the *Citoyen Libraire* of Draguignan, also offered polite literature, but with a republican flavour:<sup>192</sup> *Télèphe*, a philosophical novel in two volumes depicting "the energetic triumph of the Rights of Man, examples of moderation and wisdom, and a portrait of friendship..."; a *Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Enfants* including epistolary principles and rules of grammar; a *Lyre de la Raison* or collection of hymns to celebrate the new *fêtes décadaires*; and many more, especially novels. From the titles which found favour in both towns, it is tempting to suggest that an international reading culture was in the making there.<sup>193</sup> The readership felt that it belonged to a distinct elite, even if some servants and members of the 'lower ranks' of Draguignan and Warwick borrowed from this culture.

Draguignan was a market place like Warwick, a place where traders and buyers met on the *Place du Marché* twice a week, and at fair times three times a year. A place where placards, pamphlets, public notices, tracts, bills, caricatures,

<sup>190</sup> We may wonder if this unadvertised stock contained 'philosophical' books too.

<sup>191</sup> Dunkley, J., 'Berquin's *L'Ami des Enfants* and the hidden curriculum of class relations', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Autumn 1993, pp.185-196.

<sup>192</sup> ADV, 1L2044, Prospectuses.

<sup>193</sup> See Chapters 3.i and 6.

'*occasionels*', and '*canards*' (satirical and ephemeral broadsheets) might be found in the streets, on the market place, at fairs, and in the bag of the *colporteurs* or hawkers. These hawkers disseminated an abundance of almanacs, chapbooks from the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, alphabets or *abécédaires*, the new revolutionary calendar, and simple arithmetic manuals which must have included the Napoleonic decimal system. It was a place where legal and illegal literature might be found; even in this field, according to Darnton, the works most on demand were religious titles, equalled only by Mercier's works and various libels.<sup>194</sup> The hawkers and pedlars of books were the butt of the monarchy's police, and were described by the Lieutenant of Police as shifty individuals "who continually appear and disappear, hiding their tracks with great care like fugitives or vagabonds".<sup>195</sup> The same suspicion about their activity dogged them under the Empire. In 1816, the mayor of Draguignan was sent a warning circular, which illustrates the effort by Napoleon's government to control and curb the proliferation of popular literature:

France is scattered with hawkers who travel everywhere, even to the remotest hamlets and habitations. Ill-will and factious spirit often use these men as the seeds of falsehood and intrigue. Your administration must therefore think of utilising their activity for the good of the legitimate authority. ... To prevent them from doing harm, it is necessary to watch them and control them. Those to whom you must first of all turn your attention are the pedlars of illustrated books, almanacs, and ballads, the last ones especially having the greatest influence on the populace.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Darnton, R., *Edition et sédition*, Paris, 1991, p.219. The trade in illegal literature is eloquently described in Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Régime*, Harvard, 1982, and in *The Business...*

<sup>195</sup> Darnton, *Edition...*, p. 57, and also see the whole chapter on hawkers and travelling booksellers, pp.57-86.

<sup>196</sup> ADV, 10T 1/2, *Libraires et imprimeurs*.

Reading opportunities increased greatly with the Revolution even if later, in the late 1790s and in the early 1800s, there was a curb to this expansion. If there had not been a marked revolution in education, there certainly was one in the occasions to read. There was a proliferation of printing presses and publications, especially in the period from the promulgation of the freedom of the press on the 27 August 1789, incorporated in Article 11 of the *Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*, up to 1792 and the re-establishment of some censorship and control of the press to counter anti-revolutionary activities. There was still a relative freedom until 1797-1799, when it was stamped out to install a regime of surveillance rather than out and out censorship.<sup>197</sup> In 1800, only 13 newspapers were officially recognised and authorised, “thus putting an end to the profusion of newspapers and to the most original and creative aspect of the Revolution”,<sup>198</sup> at least until the Restoration when 136 newspapers appeared or re-appeared. This has a familiar taste that we have already encountered, in the British Government’s censorship of the same date, 1799. Most of all, the democratisation of reading in the provinces could be said to have been one of the Revolution’s remarkable achievements. We have seen how the revolutionary army was fed on a continuous diet of print which was distributed, displayed, read aloud and commented daily.<sup>199</sup> In Paris, it had already been accomplished — historians seem to agree that the population of the capital was remarkably literate at the eve of the Revolution, with a well developed system of *petites écoles* and the ubiquitousness of the written word.<sup>200</sup>

Being an administrative town, Draguignan resisted the drastically limiting

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<sup>197</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics...*, p.231.

<sup>198</sup> Vovelle, M., ed., *L'état de la France pendant la Révolution, 1789-1799*, Paris, 1988, pp.162-67.

<sup>199</sup> Chapter 2.

<sup>200</sup> Goubert, Roche, *Les Français...*, vol.2, p.204, and Roche, *The People...*, p.199, where he says that 90% of men and 80% of women signed their wills.

measures that the Old Regime imposed on presses. Thus, like Warwick, it had its own printers and booksellers as well as, rather later in 1811, its own newspaper. The town in fact had a well-established respect for the things written: on 27 October 1782, the Council nominated a Monsieur Detienne to the management of the archives for the area, “for his particular talent” (though admittedly the watering of the town allotments came first in the Council’s discussion).<sup>201</sup> The printers were first Messrs Guichard the older, from 1781, and then Guichard the younger, the Sharpes of Draguignan. They were the official printers and stationers for the administration, and they seem to have been kept busy mostly with jobbing work, or *travaux de ville* (town jobs), rather than publishing, even more so than the Sharpes. However, copyists and their pens are equally busy, judging from the bundles of handwritten administrative circular letters, received or issued by the local administration up to the 1820s. In 1810, Guichard the younger was given the authorisation by the Préfecture to publish the County newspaper, the *Journal du Var*, which replaced the *Journal de Toulon*. We hear of another printer in Draguignan, Monsieur Fabre who, for reasons of local politics or maybe patronage, appeared on 17 September 1815 when he was handed the job of official printer for the prefecture and the licence for the printing of the *Journal du Var*.<sup>202</sup> This prompted the usurped Monsieur Guichard to write a letter of supplication to the Préfet, asking for an audience and emphasising that his business is now moribund while Monsieur Fabre is very rich, which gives us a measure of the dependency of local printers on jobbing work for the administration. But Monsieur Guichard remained, nevertheless, the authorised printer of the *Feuille* for advertisements and official and legal announcements (*annonces judiciaires et avis divers*), described as a *journal* by the Ministry of Police in his hand-written authorisation sent to the ‘*Sieur*’ Guichard on 17 September 1815.<sup>203</sup> The local traders and consumers must have been keen readers of this *Feuille* to which

<sup>201</sup> ADV, BB49, Délibérations du Conseil Communal.

<sup>202</sup> In a hand-written letter from the Ministère de la Police, ADV, 10T 1/2.

<sup>203</sup> ADV, 10T1/3, *Libraires et imprimeurs*.

Monsieur Caussemille must have subscribed. This is probably how Madame Caussemille was able to give her travelling husband up-to-date information on the price of wheat and other vital commodities. The Caussemilles must have also read the *Affiches de Provence* which could be found at the Post Office, and which kept them in touch with commerce, trends, and opinions in the region. The separation of the *Journal du Var* from the *Feuille* is in the same tradition as the Old Regime monopoly of news and politics for the official *Gazette de France*, and the *Affiches* which were supposed to publish only advertisements.<sup>204</sup>

The job of these local printers and booksellers was strictly controlled by the state, as evidenced by the profusion of circular letters with their forbidding and warning edicts, in the county archives. There is the hand-written bill of 18 August 1792 emanating from the *Bureau de l'Esprit Public* forbidding the circulation of counter-revolutionary newspapers “to nip in the bud the outpouring of anti-revolutionary poisons”. It ends with ‘*Salut et Fraternité*’, the new revolutionary greeting. However, by 1815 the style had changed, Old Regime politeness was reintroduced but with a difference, the ‘obedient servant’ tends to disappear: while Monsieur Fabre, the printer, still used the old eighteenth-century formula ‘your humble and obedient servant’ (*votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur*), a letter of 12 December to the Mayor ended with a formula still used in official letters today: ‘I beg you to accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration’ — now the correspondents were equals in the sphere of politeness, a politeness which gave them distinction. This last letter warned the mayor that a catechism used in churches throughout the kingdom contained a whole chapter “devoted to the duties and loyalty owed to Napoleon”; all the copies must be found and pulped. Many of these letters

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<sup>204</sup> For the role of these *Affiches* in the formation of a consumers’ public and the importance of commercial capitalism in the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, see Jones, C., ‘The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution’, *The American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), pp.13-40.

emanated from the *Direction Générale de l’Imprimerie et Librairie*, a Paris-based government watchdog over printing and bookselling. On 18 May 1810, for instance, it sent a letter to booksellers informing them that they had to ask permission for the sale of foreign works. And a year later another letter from the *Direction* stated that no newspaper or periodical may advertise new books without their previous announcement in the official *Journal Général de l’Imprimerie et de la Librairie*.<sup>205</sup> So the book trade, as well as printing, was tightly controlled by Napoleon’s government and its *Décret Impérial sur le Règlement de l’Imprimerie et la Librairie* of 5 February 1810. But Paris rule percolated only slowly down to the provinces, and it might be received only reluctantly. This would explain why there had to be a circular letter sent on 26 January 1811 to remind printers and booksellers of the content of the decree of 1810: “No book shall be printed, sold or distributed which might interfere with the respect owed by his subjects to the Sovereign, and injure the interest of the State.”<sup>206</sup>

Even the ‘political, literary, and administrative’ *Journal du Var*, which had the blessing of the *Préfecture*, had to have its proofs checked by the administration before publication. In spite of its semi-official character, it looks to us rather unprepossessing, more like a pamphlet than a newspaper because of its surprising octavo size, like most French newspapers at the time. It came out every five days and published political news, “for the inhabitants who live in the country do not subscribe to the Paris newspapers” as the prospectus announcing its publication stated. Therefore the country folks, often described as illiterate, were expected to be able to read it or have it read to them, which gives us an interesting glimpse of contemporary expectations. Articles on agriculture, rural industries, manufacturing, literature, science, art, law, government decrees, etc., are promised in the publicity prospectus. Learned articles were promised by the *Société d’Emulation* which we have already mentioned. The issue of 28 messidor Year 12 offered on its front page a medical

<sup>205</sup> ADV,10T 1/3, *Libraires et imprimeurs*.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

article on a special gel against fever, as well as one on how to give wood a mahogany finish; news from abroad follows, with ‘le ‘bill’ de Monsieur Pitt’<sup>207</sup> on recruitment for the army, cribbed from the *Daily Advertiser*. For national news we have the Cardinal of France’s decree that all religious services need to be authorised; the local news offers information on the local wood trade and the availability of vaccination against smallpox at the town’s hospice; finally we have the entertainment page offering a fable, a charade, an article on Gaul antiquities in the area, and an advert for a new periodical, the *Annales du Midi* which, pleasingly, is still in existence today albeit in a different incarnation. The main bias of the *Journal du Var*, reflecting the interest of Préfet Fauchet, was towards educational matters; there was rarely a copy without a column, and often many, on *Instruction Publique*, a trend which reflects the vocation of the town for the manufacture and consumption of the written word.

Within this environment of books and newspapers of much greater availability, two families in Draguignan and the Warwick area illustrate the affirmation of the individual through the medium of the written word: the Caussemilles in Draguignan, and the Bissets in Leamington. We shall meet them at length in the next chapters, to show that through the play of local factors, and the medium of the written word, their private and public lives were very much enmeshed. Monsieur Caussemille defended himself from expressing political views; his success in the world of commerce depended on politeness for the easy exchange of goods between individuals. It was a world where one pretended that the politics of the public sphere must not interfere; like philanthropy, commerce was the conveyor of a ‘public’ culture which thrived on cohesion, the cohesion of a membership often with very different creeds and backgrounds. Through their production and consumption of the written word, both the French family, and their English counterpart, rose above the culture of their trade to have their share of the more public ownership of the cultural capital of their time.

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<sup>207</sup> ‘Monsieur Pitt’ was used as a dark threatening symbol of the dangers emanating from England, just as Napoleon was used as a bogeyman in England.



## Chapter 4

### **The written word as a tool of commerce and social distinction: the Caussemilles of Draguignan**

The rich collection of letters written over a period of almost half a century by the Caussemille family, and which is now kept at the *Archives Départementales du Var*, is a testimony of the importance attached to them by the family who preserved them. They knew how much had been invested in them — costly education, patient struggle with the pen, and family fortunes. The business correspondence is housed in 80 bound tomes spanning just under a century, and the main bulk of the preserved family correspondence extends during the period between 1815 and the 1830s; the frequency of the letters reflects how writing is fundamentally linked with trade. It is when a member of the family is travelling on business, doing the fairs or visiting agents and future clients, that their frequency increases. In the times of great change and instability through which they lived, communication through writing gave the Caussemilles a sense of permanence and of worth, and permanence and worth were, apart from education and wealth, especially landed wealth, the essential assets which distinguished a notable, at least a small town notable. Indeed, the Caussemilles could not belong to the group of *grands notables* as listed in *Grands Notables du Premier Empire*, because their income did not come from landed property, and their income from other assets was too low;<sup>1</sup> besides, as we shall see they were too busy in the daily business of their trade to devote enough time to the cultivation of the necessary social and especially political networks of sociability. Slowly, though, over the years, the family did accumulate enough cultural capital to enjoy the benefits of social distinction, that which places one not so much amongst those directly in power, as

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<sup>1</sup> Bergeron, L., Chaussinaud-Nogaret, G., *Grands Notables du Premier Empire*, Paris, 1988, 21 vols., vol.18 Var, Paris, 1980, and see Ellis, G., 'Rhine and Loire: Napoleonic elites and social order' in Lewis, G. & Lucas, C., *Beyond the Terror*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 232-269.

amongst those ‘who matter most’.

Descendants of the family still live in the town,<sup>2</sup> and have even moved back to the old town centre which they had left under the Empire, when more modern houses were built along the new and more spacious tree-lined avenues which came to characterise nineteenth-century towns. We shall see how the structure of their family life and of their trade gave the Caussemilles an integrated role in the world of commerce and sociability of the town and its hinterland, and how, at the same time, through their generous use of the pen, they acquired a social distinction which placed them in the circles of the town’s elite, or at least allowed them to participate in the *sociabilité culturelle* described by Daniel Roche;<sup>3</sup> this, he says, was built through correspondence and personal contact, though few traders participated in it. In the case of Provence, as in many other areas on the periphery of France, the use of spoken and written French was another prerequisite to distinction. French was the language of the bourgeois public sphere, while dialect or patois was the language either of the private sphere, of the common people, or of the public sphere of the market and, often, of the Church. The Caussemille acquired, through education, “a profitable linguistic capital”, and they fulfilled the criteria of “linguistic correctness”.<sup>4</sup> Finally, if language was for the Caussemilles of greater distinctive significance than for their British counterparts, their correspondence is a vivid illustration of a different ‘middle-class’ organisation to that described by Catherine Hall:<sup>5</sup> in the case of the Caussemilles, as we shall see, it was not organised along gender lines, neither in the public sphere of trade, nor even, to a certain extent, in that

<sup>2</sup> The *Guide de Provence, commercial, industriel, professionnel et financier*, Marseille, 1904, still lists the Caussemille firm (now Caussemille-Rampal) under ‘Soapmakers’.

<sup>3</sup> Roche, D., *Les Républicains des lettres*, Paris, 1988, pp.279-288.

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J.C., *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London, 1994 ( transl., French ed.1977), p.116.

<sup>5</sup> Hall, C., *White, Male and Middle-Class*, London, 1992, pp.94-107.

of sociability.

The *Encyclopédie* (1771-78) defined the family as a miniature version of the state, "a civil society [which] serves as the foundation of the national society". But what sort of civil society? Cultural anthropologists have defined three main types of family: the nuclear family, the vertical stem family, and the horizontal and communitarian stem family.<sup>6</sup> They say that the nuclear family is characteristic of Protestant Britain and of France north of the Loire, while south of the Loire the stem type is more prevalent, and, within that area, in the western Massif Central and Basse-Provence, the communitarian stem family type prevails. The Caussemille family fits the latter type, a familial community where there is an authoritarian relationship between parents and children and equality among brothers. The family here is a partnership, not only between brothers, but between husbands and wives, and parents and children. They represent the *Egalité* part of the revolutionary triad *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternity*, a motto which Mirabeau promoted, his whole life having been marred by the inegalitarian right of primogeniture. Indeed, André Burguière suggests that the triad illustrates the three types of family structure in France: *liberté* is for the father in the stem family to make a will according to his wishes, *égalité* is for the nuclear family, and *fraternité* for the communitarian family.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1780s, François Caussemille was a draper in the town, with a reputation as an honest and able trader.<sup>8</sup> In the minutes of the town council sessions, his

<sup>6</sup> Braudel, F., *L'identité de la France*, 1, Paris, 1986, pp.88-94; Todd, E., *The Making of Modern France* (transl., French ed.1988), Oxford, 1991, pp.62-63; Collomp, A., 'Alliance et filiation en Haute-Provence au dix-huitième siècle', *Annales E.S.C.* 32 (1977), pp.445-477; and in the same, Souriac, F., 'La famille souche', pp.478-485, refutes Laslett's contention that the majority of families are nuclear (see Laslett in *Annales E.S.C.* Jul-Oct.1972, pp.847-872).

<sup>7</sup> Burguière, A., 'La Révolution française et la famille', *Annales E.S.C.*, 46 (1991), pp.151-168.

<sup>8</sup> There are precious incidental details of family history in Mireur, F., *Les rues de Draguignan*, vols.2 & 3, Draguignan, 1931, pp.267-73.

signature figured amongst those of other 'literate' active citizens.<sup>9</sup> The same minutes indicate that his social rating was moving up the ladder: in September 1782, he was described as a *travailleur de cette ville*, a worker of the town, in October of the same year he has become a *négociant*, which in his case means a trader.<sup>10</sup> In December 1783, he was a *fabriquant*, or manufacturer, and in 1789, he was *fabriquant de draps*, a cloth manufacturer. Throughout the 1780s, he was a sporadic attender at the Council meetings, but he was present for important occasions. He was there on all first meetings of the year when the new members were nominated, or when he signed the motion of censure of the king's intendant who had slighted the authority of the *Assemblée Générale des Communautés de Provence*. He was present, too, at the first *Assemblée du Tiers Etat* of Draguignan. He was a trader and manufacturer who probably did not have the time, nor the inclination, to get involved in local politics. To begin with, he did well out of the Revolution: in 1791, he acquired part of the convent of the Order of Cordeliers, put on the market as national property. In these new and larger premises, he started the manufacture of soap, in addition to that of cloth. In 1793, as we have seen,<sup>11</sup> Barras and Fréron, commissaries of the Revolution to the Army in Italy, established, for a while, their quarters in Draguignan where they instituted *comités de surveillance* and had people suspected of federalism arrested.<sup>12</sup> François Caussemille was suspected and put into jail where it was suggested that he died of shame in 1794.<sup>13</sup> While in jail he

<sup>9</sup> ADV, BB49. The list of their signatures is often preceded by the formula, "A signé qui l'a pu.": 'Has signed who could'.

<sup>10</sup> While his sons's title of *négociant* came to mean much more as we shall see, by the time they 'made it' they were 'merchants', rather than just 'traders'.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Parès, J., 'Le Directoire du Département du Var pendant la rébellion de 1793', *Etudes et Documents*, 15 (1929).

<sup>13</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, p.268. Is he suspected because a Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Caussemille (see Bergeron, *Grands Notables...*, p.124) a lawyer in St-Tropez (and possibly a relative?) took part in the federalist insurrection in Toulon, and emigrated temporarily to Genoa on an English boat?

wrote his *Conseils à mes enfants*, a sort of moral and cultural testament, which now unfortunately seems to have been lost.<sup>14</sup> This Provençal *Père Goriot*, could be said to have started, by his written legacy, the sense of the importance of the written word which, together with his judicious buying of *biens nationaux*, contributed to the rise of the family to the ranks of ‘those who mattered’ in the town.

The four children for whom he wrote his *Conseils* were Anne, Thérèse, Jean-Pierre *l'Aîné*, ‘the Elder’, and Jean-Pierre *Cadet*, the younger, called ‘Jeannot’. The Elder, who was only 20 when his father died, took over the business and was joined in 1810 by his younger brother, who left the household only at the time of the Restoration when he moved to Marseille to establish a branch of the family soap trade there. Jean-Pierre *l'Aîné* did not entirely fit the portrait of the typical inhabitant of the Var as described in the 1817 *Directory* for the Var Department: “The inhabitants have chestnut or dark hair, very rarely fair, a swarthy complexion, vivacious and penetrating eyes and a passionate physiognomy.” In his passport of 1817, the Elder is described as tall with light brown hair, a high brow, grey eyes, wide nose, a red beard, and a ruddy complexion.<sup>15</sup> He married Rosalie Girard, and they too had four children, Jean-Henri, Alexandre, Fanny, and Auguste. Rosalie, who signed Girard-Caussemille when writing, thus keeping her own identity, was often referred to affectionately by friends and family as *laVaporeuse*, as she often complained of suffering from ‘vapours’, a condition which we might describe nowadays as PMT.

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The household up to 1816, when Caussemille junior, his wife Marie-Anne, called

<sup>14</sup> G. Audisio-Poulin in ‘Un bourgeois “janséniste” à Grasse au Dix-Huitième siècle’, *Annales du Midi*, 107 (1995), pp.35-48, draws a portrait of a trader, Louis Dominique Luce, from his *Livre de Raison* which finishes in 1810, with an *Avertissement* to his sons (although he had daughters too) on how to conduct themselves in their family life, their commercial life and their social life. We can hypothetise that François Caussemille’s *Conseils* were along similar lines, although his are addressed to his *children* rather than just his sons.

<sup>15</sup> ADV, 5J1.

Miette by the family, and their children moved to Marseille to establish a branch of the Caussemille firm there, comprised the extended family, including Thérèse the unmarried sister, who also owned other property, Rosalie's mother, and other members of the family on both sides, who lived in and out of the house, joining in and helping with family affairs. Confinements were a big family event and all the women in the family would congregate to look after the mother until after the birth.<sup>16</sup> After 1816, there was frequent visiting between the Draguignan and the Marseille households for family events and business, and letters home describe family reunions and dinners to those who had to be absent. While the Elder had gone on an 'escapade' to Marseille with Rosalie, his brother-in-law, who was holding the fort and the business for them in Draguignan, wrote: "We imagine the Reunion of such an interesting part of the family with great pleasure."<sup>17</sup> All the letters home finish with affectionate messages for the numerous members of the extended household and friends. Rosalie, away for only a few days in Marseille with her daughter Fanny, sent her greetings and compliments to the family doctor, her sister-in-law and her children, her mother, brother and sister, to "all relatives and friends", and to Monsieur Muraire one of the town's notables and a good friend. Tokens of family solidarity recur in the correspondence. When members of the family went away for a few days, on business or to the Spa for their health, or on a family visit, the whole extended family, the very ones who received affectionate greetings through the post, would congregate to meet them at the coach or at home on their return.<sup>18</sup>

This was the extended family, but it was a household-family too. Other semi-permanent members of the establishment are named in the greetings as belonging to "the family and friends", for example Rouvier, a kind of steward figure and a fixture of the manufactories, who was especially mentioned in the Elder's greetings;<sup>19</sup> and

<sup>16</sup> ADV, 5J7, 27 April 1815 (Miette's confinement).

<sup>17</sup> ADV, 5J1, July 1817.

<sup>18</sup> ADV, 5J1, Rosalie to her husband, 24 July 1817.

to her mother's list of members of the extended family, Fanny never fails to add her salutations for all the above and more, including 'Clairon' and 'Bijou', the two servants.<sup>20</sup> These two servants, whom Fanny and her brothers often included in their final greetings as part of 'the whole family', were not always there, and at times the household was without any. Indeed Rosalie complains in a letter to her husband that she is rather harassed as she "is without domestic and must do all the cooking morning and evening" while the family is descending on her: "you know our house is *l'ousteou de diou*",<sup>21</sup> she adds in Provençal. Alexandre worried about this at his boarding school: "You told me six months ago that Clairon had married and had left, and I want to know whether you have a new domestic." Later, in another letter home, he went on: "I am sorry that mum is without a servant because poor old Bijou with all his good will is not able to do everything."<sup>22</sup> And yet this is a time when the Caussemilles were beginning to do well, although they still did have two children at boarding school. This would fit in with the model of the extended and communitarian family, which has been described as the "only type to be founded on a specific economic principle whereby income is measured by the number of non-salaried family members involved" — a principle which would exclude as much as possible the use of domestic servants, as the family members are the work force.<sup>23</sup> It has been suggested that the extended families were often the better-off ones, which might explain why the *Préfet* Fauchet found that artisans and small traders employed as many servants, or as few, usually one or two, than the more well-to-do classes.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> ADV, 5J7, 30 July 1817.

<sup>20</sup> ADV, 5J7, 16 September 1819.

<sup>21</sup> "The house of god", ADV, 5J7, 22 June 1819.

<sup>22</sup> ADV, 5J8, 24 April 1821 and 13 May 1821.

<sup>23</sup> Burguière, A., 'Pour une typologie des formes d'organisation domestique de l'Europe moderne 16ème-19ème siècles', *Annales E.S.C.*, 41 (1986), pp.639-655.

<sup>24</sup> Collomp, A., 'Famille nucléaire et famille élargie en Haute Provence au dix-huitième siècle', *Annales E.S.C.*, 3 (1972), pp.969-975; Fauchet, *Statistiques...*

We thus have a convivial and communitarian life, kept together by the pen and other ties. But the authority of the Head of Family was ever present. It was established by his address to which all letters home, even his own, were addressed: to ‘Monsieur Caussemille Aîné, Négociant sur la Place’. His wife Rosalie acknowledged it in letters to him and to their children, not in reverential terms but establishing him as the best friend to them all: “Your health is precious especially for a head of family like you, let the elder [son] help you, he is lucky to have such a good and benevolent father with him in his first journey”, and she wrote to her daughter Fanny “Your father is your best friend”.<sup>25</sup> However when it was felt that the family honour and stability were at stake, the Elder’s authoritarian role came to the fore and showed its force over even those who were far away, as in his correspondence with a young brother-in-law, one of his wife’s three adopted brothers to whom he acted as mentor, correspondent, and financial supporter. This young man had left Draguignan to study medicine in Paris. When he discussed a shameful quarrel between his two brothers, it is obvious that the Elder intervened with stern authority. The brother-in-law expressed his respect, affection, and gratitude for the Elder’s concern, and bowed to his uncle’s rule. The Younger summed up the whole affair in terms of the priority of family unity: “It is a cancer we had in the family, and at whatever cost to our pride, we must never break the family unity, we must act as one.”<sup>26</sup> Later it is to the Head of Family that the young brother-in-law dedicated his thesis on the effect of the sun on health — a token of his attachment not only to his family but to his Provençal homeland.

We can get an idea of the personalities behind the letters, but we know explicitly that both parents had in common the quality of patience: a feature of letter writers? The Elder says about patience in a letter to his wife: “You know it is my favourite remedy and that I use it efficaciously in the various difficulties which come my way.”

<sup>25</sup> ADV, 5J7, 28 July 1819 and 13 June 1819.

<sup>26</sup> ADV, 5J7, letters of Autumn 1818.



Rosalie, on another occasion, wrote to her husband: “Like you, I arm myself with patience.”<sup>27</sup> So they are patient, but busy people; this is why both parents favoured the trusting of babies to a wet nurse, *mères nourrices*, thus following the ‘democratisation’ of wet-nursing which was taking place amongst the urban lower and middle ranks that started in the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The Elder recommended a wet nurse to Caussemille the Younger, away in Lyon on business, for his daughter, just born in the Caussemille home in Draguignan where Miette, the sister-in-law, had come for her confinement; the Elder’s concerns, as expressed here, were primarily for the mother’s health rather than for the convenience of the family business. But convenience must have been an important factor in the case of Madame Caussemille, with her busy trader’s life; and her children, in their letters home, mention meeting their respective wet nurses at the market, or being visited by them at school.<sup>29</sup>

The children’s personalities were marked by their letters and acknowledged and respected by the rest of the family. The eldest son, Jean-Henri, was involved at a young age in his father’s business, after a spell at a boarding school in Aix. He obviously got on well with his father, whom he resembled, according to the description on his passport of 1835,<sup>30</sup> and with whom he travelled to fairs as an apprentice, until he was entrusted to deal with some of the business on his own. Alexander was recognised as the best musician in this family of musicians, possibly with a bit of a bohemian personality which needed firm handling. We have many

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<sup>27</sup> ADV, 5J1, 30 July 1817; 5J7, 16 October 1819.

<sup>28</sup> Burguière, ‘La Révolution française...’, pp.151-168. Amanda Vickery mentions a trend towards the decline of wet-nursing in England by the end of the century, in *The Gentleman’s Daughter*, London, 1998, pp.108-109.

<sup>29</sup> ADV, 5J7, letters of April and May 1815 between the brothers; letter from Alexandre from his boarding school at Lorgues, August 1817. Letter from Fanny from her boarding school in Aix, Jan. 1821.

<sup>30</sup> ADV, 5J1.

letters from him, as he is terribly home-sick in his distant school and rather inclined to talk about himself. He later acquired a reputation as a violinist and man-of-the-world who entertained Paganini in his house.<sup>31</sup> Fanny was everybody's favourite; she too had her 'vapours' and ill health at times, like her mother, but on the whole she stands out as a lively and determined girl with a mind of her own, as we shall see later. Finally, Auguste, the one who stayed at home, was also liked by everybody, good at drawing and running the shop and house when his parents and elder brother were away.

In both eighteenth century Britain and France, professionals and traders lived mostly in the centre of towns. In Provence, they also lived side by side with the local nobles. This is where the Caussemilles could be found, on the Market Square, a prime position where one can see and be seen, conveniently central for prospective customers; to be *Négociant sur la Place* was useful commercially and socially. In the draft of a letter to the *Préfet*, the Elder protested against the proposal by the mayor to move the wheat market away from the town centre: "The entire population is astounded by this proposal ... In all market towns, as in Draguignan, the principal square is the chosen place for it is the most spacious and the most central ... It offers facilities for the buyers from abroad, and the houses opening on the square have been bought at high prices because of these advantages." And, to add insult to injury, the mayor "has already brought his sacrilegious axe on a century-old beech which was the square's ornament".<sup>32</sup> Presumably the mayor wanted to erase all memories of the Revolution, as the tree had been used as a tree of Liberty when the square temporarily became the *Place de la République*. The shop, mostly Madame Caussemille's responsibility, was also on the *Place du Marché*, and a rates bill of 1807 showed that they paid rates on their house for "1 door, 4 windows and 8 rooms".<sup>33</sup> But the Revolution brought a sizeable development of the Caussemille's

<sup>31</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, pp.270-73.

<sup>32</sup> ADV, 5J1, probably 1808.

<sup>33</sup> ADV, 5J1.

establishment, as a result of the purchase as *bien national*, by François Caussemille, of part of the Convent of the Cordeliers, south of the market square. This purchase was later described by the Elder in a summary of a dispute with Dalmas the ex-partner of the firm, over waste waters from the Caussemille soap manufactory: "Dalmas, Caussemille and Maffret Esquires bought the property of the *Ci-devants* Cordeliers where they promptly established, in partnership, a soap manufactory, one for Saturn salts and a wine distillery. In 1802 the partners divided the property in three plots and Caussemille received the soap manufactory and a portion of the church to be used as storage space for wood."<sup>34</sup> A plan of the buildings and their future use, drawn by the Elder, probably in the early 1800s, shows that the house and part of the family business were still together on the same site, in good eighteenth and early nineteenth century fashion. After Monsieur Azémar, the second *Préfet* of the Var, had had a spacious esplanade and avenues built in 1812, near the new site, the family moved to their new residence in this more elegant area, following the nineteenth century trend common to both our countries, just like the Cadburys who left Birmingham town centre for Edgbaston, although this only in the 1830s, later than the Caussemilles.<sup>35</sup> Thus they were separating themselves, but only partly, from their work premises which remained on the market square. But their new house was not in a distant leafy suburb: they moved only a few hundred yards from the old centre, and still within the old walls of the town. This new house, built for them to their design, was described as "the ancestor of our modern houses and eccentric for its time. It was the talk of the town".<sup>36</sup> The shop and the lead acetate manufactory remained by the market square, where the house they had vacated became the property of Théréson, the Elder's sister. The family empire was now on two prime sites, the trading site by the market square and the soap manufactory and their residence, which nowadays is part of the

<sup>34</sup> ADV, 5J2, *Pour Note*.

<sup>35</sup> Davidoff, L., & Hall, C., *Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, London, 1987, pp.56-57.

<sup>36</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, pp.267-73.

*Hôtel de Ville*, in the more elegant quarter where for a few years they were the neighbours of the *Préfet*.

The Caussemille trade was representative of the economy of Provence, and of the Var in particular; in our period it was based on the sale of local products, mainly olive oil, wine, and products manufactured from local resources, and on the purchase of wheat. Draguignan, with Grasse, was the main centre of the olive oil trade and soap manufacture, well into the nineteenth century, in spite of neighbouring Marseille's strong competition, which the *Cahiers de Doléances* of Draguignan had complained about.<sup>37</sup> There were three levels to Draguignan's economy: the provision of the town's needs in goods and services; an exchange market between the plain and the mountain areas where wheat was the staple item of trade; and, finally, the more open level of trade with the wider region, including the Rhône valley and the Languedoc. We know Caussemille the Elder's views on the local economy from his 'Memoirs on commerce and manufacturing in the Var',<sup>38</sup> undated hand-written notes which he might have made for the benefit of the *Préfet* Fauchet who, together with all the other Prefects of France, had been required by the Emperor to contribute to the *Statistique Générale de la France*, to be published by the Ministry of Interior in 1805; or they might have been written for the benefit of the *Société d'Emulation*, founded by Fauchet in 1801 to improve local agriculture and manufacturing. Caussemille described oil as "the area's main agricultural wealth and the principal source of commerce with the rest of France". He complained that the use of seed oils was damaging the Var's trade in olive oil and the quality of the soap of which he was a manufacturer. He would like the raising of the duties on Italian and Middle-Eastern oils to favour indigenous ones. But when it did not affect his own business, he was

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<sup>37</sup> Mireur, F., *Cahiers de Doléances des Communautés de la Sénéchaussée de Draguignan*, Draguignan, 1889, 'Cahier de Draguignan', article 59: "That the soap factories of Provence be given the means to withstand the rivalry of those at Marseille, by giving them an equal franchise of the duties on the necessary products".

<sup>38</sup> ADV, 5J1, *Mémoire sur le commerce et l'industrie du Département du Var*, ? 1808 or 1810.

definitely for free trade: “We must be able to spread our products outside.” He was against the blockade of goods from neighbouring countries. For instance, as a man who set great store by the written word, as we shall see, and who needed it for the success of his trade, he devoted a long paragraph of his *Memoirs* to the local papermaking industry which manufactured a fair quality paper. He was of the opinion that the three local paper mills would benefit from the reopening of commercial relationships with the Levant. Another product of the local industry in which the Maison Caussemille was involved was cloth manufacturing, which Caussemille described as in decline “because of the progress luxury has made amongst the popular class who now wears finer cloth and velvet”. He believed that the Var could meet the new demand if machines were introduced. His modernising views were adopted by his sons who, twenty years later, introduced the weaving of silk in the area.<sup>39</sup> The third main local product, lead acetate or ‘Saturn salt’ for use in the local manufacture of dyes, again involved the Caussemilles, who manufactured it in Draguignan from their own vinegar and from lead imported from England. And there was wheat: its availability and price determined the ups and downs of local trade. It loomed large in the Caussemille letters; one of their *raison d’être* was to give information on local prices and provision to whoever was away on tour. “Sales are slow, wheat is still very expensive, and we were short of it at the last market”<sup>40</sup> was a recurrent complaint in Madame Caussemille’s letters. Her husband refers to problems of transport of the wheat he has bought or is selling, and to requisitions of wheat by the army in 1815, and he remarked: “What can we do? This district is so obedient.”<sup>41</sup> The Caussemilles also owned a flour mill, one of the mills previously owned by the area’s nobles and sold at the time of the Revolution.<sup>42</sup> The Elder was

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<sup>39</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, p.273.

<sup>40</sup> ADV, 5J7, 22 July 1816.

<sup>41</sup> ADV, 5J7, 29 May 1815 and 1 June 1815.

<sup>42</sup> Madame Reboul-Taradeau, widow of a well-to-do land owner and ex-mayor of Draguignan who was previously married to a Dame Caussemille, made good during the 1790s and, in her *Livre de*

requested by the mayor of Fréjus, where the mill was, to maintain the ground around it in a good state of repair.<sup>43</sup>

The Elder's dominant theme in his *Mémoire sur le commerce et l'industrie* was "the importance of information and therefore communication". This is why the four most important traders in the town, and these included the Maison Caussemille, created their own system for transporting goods out of the area, or to and from their different sites of business.<sup>44</sup> They needed a good network and their various businesses were strategically situated to facilitate exchange: the shop, the twice weekly stall on the market square, the fairs, their flour mill in Grasse, and the soap manufactories in the town as well as in St Raphaël, which served as a port for Draguignan. They had their mule drivers and their cart drivers, and of course there was the thrice weekly mail coach for their written communications. These big traders might have prompted Draguignan's *agent national* to request a daily delivery of mail "for the sake of commerce", as he wrote in 1794 to the Paris Commission for military and general transport of goods and mail.<sup>45</sup>

It is obvious that, although their activity was totally integrated within the Provençal civilisation which was characteristic of our period, the Caussemilles had a modern, forward looking outlook which made them stand out amongst the traders and shopkeepers in the town. The Elder had chosen to call himself *négociant*, a vague term at the time which, as Maurice Agulhon remarks, could cover many different activities or a single one. But, says Agulhon, even if the label of *négociant* is old and vague, it included some dynamic manufacturers whom he calls *notables industriels*, who emerged from the artisan production without distinguishing

*Raison*, she justified her buying of a flour mill and land "from the Nation" by her fear of the devaluation of paper money as "capitalists can be ruined", ADV, 2J483.

<sup>43</sup> ADV, 5J1, 2 ventôse Year 13 (1810).

<sup>44</sup> Bouvier, P., *Un maire et sa ville sous le Premier Empire Napoléonien*, Nice, 1977, p.22.

<sup>45</sup> ADV, *Postes*, 1L 1532, Year II.

themselves from it very clearly.<sup>46</sup> In the Caussemille's case it involved manufacturing and transport as well as commissioning, wholesale, and retail trade. This title and the multiplicity of the Maison Caussemille's activities did not mean that the family was prosperous, for most of this trade was seasonal: the olive oil, and therefore the soap making, the 'Saturn salts', and the silk weaving when it was later introduced in the firm. They were all tied to the rhythms of agriculture and the vagaries of the weather. Each concern was small and mostly managed by the family: in the best years, the Caussemille soap manufactory employed on average three workers but never more than five, and the making of 'Saturn salts' needed two workers, and that only during the vinegar season.<sup>47</sup> We shall see a similar precariousness in the existence of James Bisset in the Warwick area.<sup>48</sup> In the difficult year of 1815, a year of political upheavals and uncertainty marked by the *Cents Jours* and the White Terror, the Elder told his brother: "I don't sell sisal or sugar [in the shop] anymore and soon I shan't even earn my household money. Buyers are vanishing and my monthly earnings have diminished by a third."<sup>49</sup> Yet when Fauchet was asked by the Emperor to provide a list of the principal traders and shopkeepers in the Var, Caussemille is amongst the 25 he selected, amongst bankers, wholesalers and traders.<sup>50</sup> Whatever their title, the Maison Caussemille was a partnership based on trust, equality, and affectionate politeness. Recurrent messages in the Elder's letters to his brother, his brother-in-law, and his wife, were "do as you feel fit" or "tell my brother-in-law I approve of everything he's done and everything

<sup>46</sup> Agulhon, M., *La vie sociale en Provence intérieure au lendemain de la Révolution*, Paris, 1970, pp.287 & 299.

<sup>47</sup> ADV, 16M 1/3, *Statistique industrielle*, 1815-1824. Unlike his rivals, Dalmas and Clément, Caussemille kept his manufactures going, even when oil is scarce and prices are high, as in 1816 and 1819.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>49</sup> ADV, 5J7, 29 May 1815.

<sup>50</sup> ADV, 16M 1/4, *Statistique industrielle*, 1830-1839.

he'll do".<sup>51</sup> Now and again, the Elder was not above a bit of industrial spying of other people's manufactures. He had a compatriot who manufactured fine soap very successfully in Paris, and he asked his medical student nephew to extract discretely as much information as possible from observation and naive questions. The nephew also acted for him as an agent, with the task of finding possible buyers for the firm's olive oil. It was all in the family.

In this trusting partnership, women had an acknowledged and independent role in the family trade and, as we shall see, Madame Caussemille could certainly not be described as a 'hidden investment'.<sup>52</sup> There had been in Provence a well established tradition of women brokers, or *courtières*. Together with midwives, they were nominated and paid by the municipality to control transactions, especially of wheat: Draguignan Council's nominations for the year 1788, for instance, confirmed Magdelaine Tourtour, Elisabeth Martin, and Catherine Jauffret as the town *courtières*.<sup>53</sup> Therefore women were visible and active participants in commercial transactions. The Elder's business travel diary shows that he always made note of the role of the wives of his clients. He approved of husband and wife partnerships: "M.G. is perfectly seconded by his wife" or "Mrs R. conducts the business very well."<sup>54</sup> Caussemille did the buying and the commissioning, and Madame Caussemille did the selling; and was helped by her son Auguste, she had the entire responsibility of the shop on the square. They sold agricultural hardware which the men in the family would buy on a grand scale, principally at the Beaucaire fair;<sup>55</sup> they sold sisal too, and some basic groceries like sugar and salt. This shop loomed

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<sup>51</sup> ADV, 5J7, 24 May 1813 and 23 July 1817.

<sup>52</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes...*, Chap. 6, ' "The hidden investment": women and the enterprise', pp.272-315.

<sup>53</sup> ADV, BB49, *Délibérations du conseil général*, 4 Jan 1788.

<sup>54</sup> ADV, 5J1, *Carnet de voyage en Bourgogne*, 1815.

<sup>55</sup> ADV, 5J7, 25 July 1817. In this letter to his wife, the elder gives an impressive list of the goods he purchased, two cart-loads of them for his wife to sell; See Appendix I to Chap.4.



large in her letters, especially when there were difficult times: “I regret to have to leave you now but I have to put some order in my shop, although I have not much to sell”, and her husband sympathised: “Rosalie is worried sick not to be able to provide all the basic goods in her shop.”<sup>56</sup> The stall on the market square was a joint responsibility. When Rosalie ran it she made her own decisions as to stock and prices, and informed her husband in her letters. The Elder described her in full swing, to his brother: “On Saturday I put down my pen, and went to the Market where I found Rosalie setting up the stall, surrounded by a crowd of buyers.”<sup>57</sup> And about himself he says: “A good market yesterday in spite of the rain... There were many buyers. I sold wheat by myself.”<sup>58</sup> Finally, Madame Caussemille also had a role in the family soap manufacture, as would appear from a letter to the Elder where she discussed problems about their workers; she acted as personnel manager in his absence and negotiated with one of their old workers after they decided to appoint a new workmaster: “He does not like to be ordered about by a new master. I shall reason with him and persuade him to go to Marseille to work for your brother.”<sup>59</sup> This is unlike the women overseers described by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall who, they say, only supervised a workforce of women in their family business, and usually behind closed doors.<sup>60</sup> She was present not only in the public world of business, but also in that of the stock market. A friend of the family wrote: “I’ll do my bit at the stock exchange for Madame Caussemille.”<sup>61</sup> There were no strongly gendered separate spheres in this family. It has been said about the ‘public’ versus ‘private’ distinction that “the degree to which in practice families adhered to ‘separate spheres’ ideology remains the subject of much debate”. It was more a question of

<sup>56</sup> ADV, 5J1, 22 July 1816; and 4 May 1815 to his brother.

<sup>57</sup> ADV, 5J1, 4 May 1815.

<sup>58</sup> ADV, 5J7, 27 April 1815.

<sup>59</sup> ADV, 5J7, 10 Nov. 1819.

<sup>60</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes...*, p.251 and p.275.

<sup>61</sup> ADV, 5J1, 25 Germinal Year V.

“articulated norms versus actual behaviour”.<sup>62</sup> This describes our family well, and also fits in with the partnership model of the family community described earlier. If all of the mail was addressed to him, even his letters to his wife and children, this is of minor import, as compared with the constant public role of Madame Caussemille in business transactions, and with her mobility in public places. Her journeys to Marseille and in the Var usually combined business and family purposes; an integration of the public and the private which is very different from the compartmentalisation described by Davidoff and Hall as characteristic of the English middle-class of the time.

Their considerable correspondence was the remarkable characteristic of the family commerce in all its meanings of conversation, communication, and trade, and it was the necessary cement of their partnership. In fact, it probably was its most important aspect, at least in the eyes of the head of family. His remark: “On Saturday I put down my pen and went to the market...” is revealing of where his preferences lay, even on a busy market day. He was known for caring more for the quality of his writing, even in his business correspondence, than for his manufactures, and “that he derived more pleasure from commerce with Horace, Voltaire and the minor poets of the eighteenth century, than from the commerce of soap”.<sup>63</sup> In 1819, the Elder wrote to his wife about “his dear elder son’s” writing style and, of the son’s letter to him, he says that it was “spiked with capital letters every 2 or 3 words. They are like a forest of tall trees which prevent me from seeing the saplings... For the capital letters the rule is short and easy, and I have given it to you already. As to the handwriting itself, and its form and its beauty, there is only practice, constant practice. *Bad writing cannot be allowed these days, now that everybody writes well. You have had enough lessons.*”<sup>64</sup> For him, writing was not just a useful tool, it

<sup>62</sup> Klein, L., ‘Gender and Public/Private distinction’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), pp 99-109.

<sup>63</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.2, p.88.

<sup>64</sup> ADV, 5J7, my italics.

was a thing of elegance and beauty which had to be perfected if one wanted to keep up with ‘everybody’. Is it to be assumed that ‘everybody’ here means his fellow traders, and maybe more generally the middling ranks to which they belong? Earlier, his father François Caussemille set a precedent by writing his ‘Advice to his Children’, presumably a sort of moral testament. Writing therefore was taken seriously, and its importance was explicitly recognised. The quality of the Elder’s writing gave him authority and recognition as head of family, and as senior partner in the firm. Also, the *negociant*’s activity was defined by an epistolary economy, as it were, based on the careful writing of promissory notes or *lettres de change*; this meant a constant and vigilant use of the pen with regular and potential clients who, as the Caussemille’s business ledgers and correspondence show, were scattered far and wide in Alsace, Switzerland, the Rhône valley, the Languedoc, and Italy, as well as Provence. Good written French, well and clearly written promissory letters, and polite correspondence were prerequisites to being a successful and respected *négociant*. As Chartier says “correspondence had a close relationship with accountancy”, it created a privileged bond between the correspondents, and it introduced a reassuring order within the social and, in our case, the commercial realm.<sup>65</sup>

It is now time to consider how this education in writing came about. There were facilities in the town for those who wanted an education and could attend regularly because they were not kept away from schooling by the seasonal labour in the fields.<sup>66</sup> The women in the household must have learnt literacy under the supervision of one of the three teaching orders present in the town before the Revolution: the Visitandines, the Ursulines, and the Benedictines. Thérèse, one of the Elder’s sisters, wrote well and in an elegant hand. She was very religious and

<sup>65</sup> Chartier, R., ed., *La correspondance—Les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle*, Paris, 1991, pp.453-456.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 2.

organised secret catholic services during the 1790s, and must have been a pupil in one of the town's convents, maybe the private one run by the Visitandines where they taught "everything pertaining to a careful education".<sup>67</sup> All the women in the household were literate; indeed, many letters announce the promise of a letter from a sister or a sister-in-law. Madame Caussemille's style of letter-writing was lively and fluent, and if her spelling and punctuation were poor and never improved much, it did not stop her from writing frequent and long letters to her husband and to the children; and her "tender and dear friend", as she addressed her husband, apparently never criticised her style, at least not in his letters. But she herself acknowledged her difficulties to him: "You know that I can speak with my tongue better than with my pen."<sup>68</sup> The Elder, son of an artisan and small trader, must have been taught by one of the four schoolteachers paid by the town, and then there was the College which was still flourishing at the time he was of an age to attend. Yet, because of the upheavals of the Revolution, he may have missed the final years and been apprenticed, but his beautifully handwritten algebra, geometry, and trigonometry exercise books dated Year VII (1799) testify that he later pursued his studies. We know that he was an apprentice in a firm in Toulon during the Terror, and that he brought back home the news of the presence of the *fédérés* in the town.<sup>69</sup> He probably attended the public evening classes held at the *Ecole Centrale Supplémentaire* which had replaced the old College, already notorious for its teaching of mathematics and physics.

By the time the Caussemille children were of school age, educational trends and local schooling had changed. Interestingly, there was no marked gender divide in the education they received, apart from the subject of Latin. Was it a consequence of the

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<sup>67</sup> Fauchet, *Statistiques* ...

<sup>68</sup> ADV, 5J7, 16 Sept. 1819; see Appendix II to Chapter 4 for the full text of the letter.

<sup>69</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, pp.267-73. From July 1793, there was a violent uprising of the *fédérés* in Toulon which, up to then, had been a Jacobin stronghold; it ended up by the delivery of the fleet to the English.

egalitarian ideas of the Revolution, Jansenist sympathies, or just family inclination? — may be a mixture of all three. Until the children were in their teens, in the 1810s, they were probably educated by the local schoolmasters, who were vetted by the town authorities but paid by the parents. We know that young Fanny, at least, had some home tuition in writing: “Fanny is working on a letter dictated by her teacher” her mother wrote to her father,<sup>70</sup> and she adds: “Alexandre is in the kitchen concocting a letter for you in Latin”, which, along with the school reports, tells us that the sons were getting a classical education. We have also seen earlier that the father reminded his elder son that he should know the rules of letter writing, as he had had “many lessons”, either from a private teacher or from his own father. It has been said that, in the early nineteenth century, “orthography was, in private schools, the piano of the time”.<sup>71</sup> However, in spite of their attachment to their children and to their town, the parents decided to send them away to boarding schools, because of the new fashion for these establishments, and the general suspicion towards the unstable record of the College since the Revolution, as well as the suspicion about State intervention in traditionally local affairs.<sup>72</sup> (But not all members of the family decided against the College: for instance, the Elder’s nephew, Jean-Pierre Clément was educated there, and actually became one of the national literati of the time, a member of the Paris *Institut*.) They made a big sacrifice by sending them away, but they had no option because Draguignan had no private school at the time. They wanted the best education for their children, so they sent the elder son to Aix, and the

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<sup>70</sup> ADV, 5J7, 22 July 1816. But Fanny probably went to the Draguignan boarding-school for girls run by nuns too, as she says in letters home from boarding-school in Aix, that she won’t have time to write for a while because of her examinations and that she wishes to be excused by the teachers at her former school in Draguignan, and by her aunts, or on the contrary she complains that she has not received a reply from the *demoiselles de la pension*: ADV 5J7, 15 October 1820 and 5J8, 24 Juin 1821.

<sup>71</sup> Brunot, F., *Histoire de la langue française*, Paris, 13 vols., 1947-1967, vol. 7, p.119.

<sup>72</sup> See chapter 2.

two younger ones to Lorgues, very near Draguignan. When Alexandre the musician was found not to do well enough in Lorgues, he was sent to the *Pensionat de l'Enfance* in far-away Lyon. Madame Caussemille wrote to her son, who had gone to his new school accompanied by his father: "I beg you to be very reasonable when your father leaves you, ... he is a dad who sacrifices himself for his children." And to her husband she wrote: "It is a great sacrifice for a father, who loves his children as you do, to send them away." However the Caussemille had trade interests and a network of friends and business acquaintances in Lyon who could be relied upon to keep an eye on Alexandre and take him out. Fanny was sent to the *Maison d'Education*, a boarding school in Aix, where she was much less isolated than her brother, since her father or uncle often visited her while in the town for business. The children's sacrifice was of course also considerable. There had been a joint family decision about sending the two younger ones away at the same time and for two years only which, as in Britain, was then the average length of a boarding school education. Alexandre wrote from Lyon: "I would like to know if Fanny will leave her school at the same time as me, as it had been decided."<sup>73</sup> Homesickness was the price they had to pay, and the parents sent chocolate, cakes, and sugar to Fanny, olives and anchovies to Alexandre, in regular parcels from home. They also responded to requests for a violin, bonnets, crayons, braces, and books, and there were the usual bundles of clothes to be washed. The children were also very aware of the cost to their parents; for instance Alexandre wrote: "I am only too aware of all the sacrifices you are making for me" and "I do want all the expenditures you make on my behalf to bear their fruit".<sup>74</sup>

Neither of the boarding schools were religious establishments, but Religion and Morals were top of the list of subjects in school reports, which reveal that neither Fanny nor Alexandre excelled in piety. Their best subject was Music, especially

<sup>73</sup> ADV, 5J8, 24 January 1821: "I am dying of homesickness", or "Every night, I dream I am in Draguignan"; and in January 1821, Fanny wrote: "I have an ardent desire to see you..."

<sup>74</sup> ADV, 5J8, 29 January 1821, and 11 April 1821.

chamber music, as one would expect from this convivial family and, as one would also expect, they both said they would much rather play with their brothers and father.<sup>75</sup> Latin, Rhetoric, and Italian were Alexandre's other main subjects: a classical education probably chosen for mixed reasons of culture (Latin and Rhetoric), utility (Italian, for the family trade with Italy), and sociability (Music, to be played with family and friends) — all good capital for a place in society. Not too surprisingly, Mathematics was not part of his curriculum, although we know that his father destined him to enter the family trade, because they were not seen as part of a socially useful 'culture'. On the other hand, Fanny, whose best subjects were Music, Writing, and History, took up Mathematics at a later stage and became very good at it. Both children had 'modern' ideas about what education should be, and they made decisions of their own. Fanny made up her mind that she should stay another year at school "so that when I go back to Draguignan nobody will be able to say I am good at nothing".<sup>76</sup> And the Head of her school reassured the parents that "she has a lesson in arithmetics every day to perfect herself so that she can help you when you need it".<sup>77</sup> Alexandre planned his future equally carefully. He would accept to go back to Lyon to learn physics and chemistry and "learn commerce in all the firms you'll choose for me" but, unlike his sister, he wanted first to go home for a year: "When I have finished my final year, I intend to go back to Draguignan where I can learn writing, mathematics, and get a training in commerce in your office."<sup>78</sup> Thus were the professionally useful subjects learnt at home, while socially useful culture was learnt abroad, according to the model of socially ambitious middling classes. Yet.

<sup>75</sup> ADV, 5J8: Alexandre wrote: "For the first time I have a good accompanist at school, but I would rather be accompanied by my brothers", 4 Mars 1820. Haydn seems to have been one of their favourite composers.

<sup>76</sup> ADV, 5J8, 1821, nd.

<sup>77</sup> ADV, 5J8, 11 December 1821. It is very likely that Fanny helped with book-keeping for the firm in later years.

<sup>78</sup> ADV, 5J8, 18 April 1821.

unlike the traders described by Davidoff and Hall,<sup>79</sup> the ambition of the Caussemilles was not to send their offspring into the professions to give them access to the social elite;<sup>80</sup> they wanted them to remain traders, but educated enough to be able to participate in the *sociabilité culturelle* of the town. They were sent to school in order to “learn the legitimate manner of using the legitimate culture”.<sup>81</sup>

How was this education of the Caussemilles translated into writing? Although they had a definite voice, a family voice to which we shall return, they all had their individual styles of calligraphy which reflected, to a certain extent, the *Encyclopédie*’s description of the three main types of handwriting. The Elder used the ‘French’ or ‘round’ style, which “produces virile and uncommon effects ... it admits complicated movements”. His writing was flowing, and punctuated by long and florid descenders which render difficult its reading. A style which befits the head of family, and which was imitated, though in a less florid way, by the elder son. It was literate and mostly respected the rules of spelling and punctuation. He set an example for the rest of the family, an example hard to follow, as his wife told him, as she reported their elder son’s comment: “It is not through indifference that the elder son did not write sooner but because he says that he does not know how to write well.”<sup>82</sup> His young brother-in-law wrote from Paris: “I enjoy the details you give me in your letters all the more as they are couched in true epistolary style”, and in another letter he thanked the Elder for correcting his style.<sup>83</sup> It appears that Fanny was the only one in the family to have been taught the ‘Italian’ style, which *l’Encyclopédie* describes as “essentially simple and precise, admitting no ornaments and rejecting all hint of the extraordinary or the surprising...”. Madame Caussemille

<sup>79</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes...*, p.244.

<sup>80</sup> “I see with great pleasure that you destine your son for commerce” wrote the Head of the *Maison de l’Enfance* to Alexandre’s father. ADV, 5J8, October 1820.

<sup>81</sup> Bourdieu, Passeron, *Reproduction in Education...*, p.129.

<sup>82</sup> ADV, 5J7, 29 July 1816.

<sup>83</sup> ADV, 5J7, 10 May 1818, and 28 June 1818.



and the rest of the family used the third type of handwriting which was a combination of the two previous ones, and was called *de permission* because it permitted personal touches, and was in essence more spontaneous and more ‘modern’. As we have seen, her style was certainly lively, though the spelling was rather erratic and often phonetic; over the years it became more sophisticated, either under the guidance of her husband or, probably, through practice and attendance at some of her children’s lessons. Except for Fanny, the children’s hands were not as legible as those of their parents’. But their father’s exhortations bore fruit and they seem to have taken their letter-writing more seriously; we no longer have hastily scribbled notes written on a scrap of paper on the corner of the kitchen table; in fact, the bill sent by Alexandre’s school in 1821 shows a bigger sum due for postage than for books or music lessons. Fanny had a studious schoolgirl’s style, rather similar to that of the Bisset daughters when they wrote home to their parents in Leamington, letters according to the manual, where politeness impedes spontaneity: “I beg you to believe me your respectful and faithful daughter.” Letter writing was very much a taught subject and her school report in the first term of 1821 contained a note from the Head: “Mademoiselle Charlier begs Monsieur and Madame Caussemille to applaud and give much praise to good letters home and only to encourage the mediocre ones.”<sup>84</sup> But, besides this formal produce of private education away from home, she could also write with much more spontaneity and zest, chiding her father for not practising his violin, both her parents for not writing enough, or criticizing her school. All the family letters are extremely affectionate, but, except for Alexandre when at school, the men’s letters contained a larger part devoted to business while the women’s had a larger section about family news, although the topic of health was first, foremost, and *de rigueur* in all the correspondence, an epistolary ritual of the private sphere.

On the whole, however, the family does not seem to have been unduly affected by the letter-manuals of the time. Their style was natural and informal within certain

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<sup>84</sup> ADV, 5J8, 1821.

basic rules like that of addressing oneself to one person only, and that writing a letter should be like a conversation. Like their Warwickshire counterparts, as we shall see, the children addressed themselves to either of their parents, very rarely to both together, and the same applied to letters written by one parent to the family at home.<sup>85</sup> A letter was a commerce between two individuals, even if it was obviously written to be read aloud, in part at least, to family and friends. It would seem that by the epistolary standards of the time, the Caussemilles were quite ‘modern’ and ahead of their time, if compared to those of their contemporaries as analysed by Marie-Claire Grassi.<sup>86</sup> The terms of address the family used reveal subtle nuances of family hierarchies. Madame Caussemille and her husband address each other in terms which vary with the mood of the moment. Madame wrote to *Mon cher époux*, *Mon très cher époux*, *Mon cher ami*, *Mon cher et bon ami*, *Mon cher et tendre ami*, or she would enter straight into conversation with him and embed her address in her first sentence: “It is always with the greatest pleasure, my dear friend, that I receive...” Her ‘dear friend’ does the same with her: “One must love you as I do my dear Rosalie...”, or she is *Ma chère Rosalie*, on a par with the *Mon cher Jeannot* he uses for his younger brother, and *Ma chère amie*. There is an egalitarian quality here in the use of ‘ami’ or ‘amie’ to express mutual conjugal love; it is a term only used between men in Grassi’s instances, while ‘friend’, as used in Richardson’s *Pamela*,

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<sup>85</sup> In Dauphin, C., Lebrun-Pézerat, P., Pouban, D., ‘Une correspondance familiale au dix-neuvième siècle’, Bossis, M., ed., *La lettre à la croisée de l’individuel et du social*, Paris, 1994, pp.125-145, Lebrun-Pézerat underlines this feature in the correspondence of a young man who usually writes to one of his parents although the letter is obviously for both.

<sup>86</sup> Grassi, M.C., ‘Friends and lovers (or the codification of intimacy)’, *Yale French Studies*, 71-72 (1986), pp.77-92, in which she analyses a corpus of 1,100 personal letters written by members of the French nobility: the Caussemilles used terms of affection and love which according to her, appeared only well after 1820, like ‘bon’, ‘tendre’, ‘ami’ (for or by a woman), and they even use words like ‘caresses’, or ‘amour’ to express familial affection, terms which were never used according to Grassi. Could it be that the nobility stuck longer to certain formulaic expressions which were slowly replaced by the language of the middle-classes?

is “one-sided”, from wife to husband as her protector. according to Naomi Tadmor.<sup>87</sup> Yet Rosalie never addresses her husband by his first name, and with their children they mark their status within the family. daughter or son, rather than their first name. The sons use affectionate addresses: *Mon très cher papa, maman, frère* etc. Fanny is more restrained. As we have seen she sticks to the epistolary rules as laid out at school, so hers is just a *Mon cher papa, Ma chère maman*. Both the Elder’s brother and his sister Thérèse use the more restrained *Mon cher* also.

The style of the letters indicates other complicated family hierarchies. Caussemille the Younger used the formal *vous* in his letters to the Elder as head of the family, while the latter called him by the affectionate diminutive ‘Jeannot’ and used the *tu* form. Both parents used the *vous* to each other, but *tu* to their children; inversely the children *tu* each other, but they used the *vous* to their parents. We do not know if these rules of etiquette were observed in their speech at home where, like most Provençals at the time, they must have often used the patois. In the early nineteenth century, Provence was in a state of bilingualism where French was the second language,<sup>88</sup> and the Caussemilles were certainly bilingual. At the manufactory, at the flour mill, on the market square, in the shop, and at the fairs, Provençal was the language of exchange, although according to the 1817 *Annuaire du Département du Var*: “The French language is replacing the Provençal language everyday, and it will succeed in eradicating it completely.”<sup>89</sup> But that was rather overstated, for if there was a big effort at francisation by the *Préfets*, the Restoration religious revival reintroduced the patois for the success of its missionary work;<sup>90</sup> it

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<sup>87</sup> Tadmor, N., ‘ ‘Family’ and ‘friend’ in Pamela: a case-study in the history of the family in eighteenth-century England’, *Social History*, 14 (1989), pp.289-306. Is there also a Protestant or Jansenist influence here? The idea of friendship in marriage belonged to both of these cultures.

<sup>88</sup> Agulhon, M., *La République au village*, Paris, 1970, pp.192-193.

<sup>89</sup> ADV, PER 15, *Annuaire du Département du Var*, Draguignan, 1817.

<sup>90</sup> Merle, R., *L’écriture du provençal de 1775 à 1840*, 2vols., Béziers, 1990: 2, p.626. To

is not until the 1860s, or even the 1880s with mass education, that the patois began really to give way.<sup>91</sup> Alexandre, exiled in Lyon, expressed his nostalgia for home through his unexpected pleasure at being able to speak in patois, the language of home, with one of the firm's carriers who had come to visit him: "Our conversation in patois has given me more pleasure than any I have had in the last 16 months. Please beg Papa to send me all the carriers who go through Lyon! I have kissed this compatriot with an inexpressible joy."<sup>92</sup> Even when speaking French, Alexandre must have kept his Provençal accent, as hinted in a letter of the Head of his school to Monsieur Caussemille, where he advises that children should be sent to his school early in order "to help them lose this Southern accent which is so difficult to extirpate".<sup>93</sup> Alexandre himself admitted as much: "I am trying as much as I have it in me to correct my Provençal accent which the pupils laugh at sometimes, and I have managed to change it a bit", but it was a half-hearted effort and he defended himself to his parents: "You seem to ignore the fact that the accent and language of Lyon are much worse than that of Provence."<sup>94</sup> If accent was not an essential indicator of class, language was, of both class and gender. Those who had had an education in the French language, both spoken and written, were distancing themselves from the lower classes and, equally, women were more likely to be more fluent with the language of home and of the market, which would be mostly dialect or patois. We have seen that Madame Caussemille often employed dialectal turns of phrase, or even the occasional Provençal expression.

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illustrate the administrative efforts at francisation, Merle quotes the Prefect Fauchet as saying: "We are not Provençals in Draguignan, we are *Varois*" (I, p.392).

<sup>91</sup> Weber, E., *Peasants into Frenchmen*, London, 1976, in his chapter 'A wealth of tongues' pp.67-94, describes the discrepancy between official statistics and the reality in the villages and small towns.

<sup>92</sup> ADV, 5J8, 5 February, 1821.

<sup>93</sup> ADV, 5J8, 1821.

<sup>94</sup> ADV, 5J8, 13 May 1821.

From the little we know about what the family read, it was just as removed from home life as the Latin or Rhetoric or French Grammar they had been learning at school. Here we must speak of religion, as most of the few books mentioned in the correspondence are religious works. As we have seen earlier, religion in Provence was becoming, to a certain extent, a woman's realm, even more so than in the rest of France.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, the very few allusions to religion we find in the Caussemille's correspondence were in the women's letters, especially in Thérèse's, the most avowedly religious member of the family. In a letter to her daughter, Madame Caussemille described a procession she attended in Marseille for the *Fête Dieu*, one of the festivals where the baroque pomp of Provençal religion still prevailed; but she criticised the quality of the music, which lacked flutes and *loubets*, a sort of Provençal pipe. Religious festivals were obviously more of a grand affair in Draguignan, as Fanny also criticised the celebrated *Fête Dieu* procession in Aix in a letter to her father;<sup>96</sup> but to her mother, Fanny mentioned her retreats at school in preparation for her first communion, and the happiness it gave her. She too, like her aunt Thérèse, said that she prayed every day for the health of various members of the family and, except for the same Thérèse, these epistolary references to religious matters took place only between the women of the family. The children's school reading, as evidenced by bills sent home or by the children's letters, appears to have been mostly of the religious kind which was characteristic of the Restoration's renewal of the status of religion in society. Fanny wanted her parents to send her a book of hours, and they were billed by Alexandre's school for a New Testament, a

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<sup>95</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>96</sup> All this religious pomp confirms M. Vovelle's description of the return of the votive festivals, especially strong in Provence, after the failure of the Revolutionary festivals, in his chapter 'Les métamorphoses de la fête', *La mentalité révolutionnaire*, Paris, 1985, pp.160-168; in his book *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris, 1976, Vovelle comments ( esp.pp.44 & 70) that festivals were of a more religious character in the Var than in west Provence, and this is why Aix's Fête Dieu which had been famous until the eve of the Revolution was not up to Fanny's expectations.

Lyon book of hours, a funeral oration, and a religious poem, together with a Roman history, a book of French prosody, and an Italian dictionary. Alexandre, understandably, asked for *livres de lecture* to be sent to him, by which he probably meant something other than school manuals and what you read for pleasure. We don't know much more about what the parents read. Alexandre thanks his father for writing to him about the books he had read and liked, but we are left puzzled. It would seem that the Elder had serious lay pursuits: he ordered from his brother-in-law in Paris a History of France, a Universal History in two volumes, and a History of England; and his younger brother in Marseille promised to bring him "the book by Chaptal", which might have been his *Eléments de chimie*, which was the most popular book on chemistry throughout the nineteenth century, or his *De l'industrie française*, or, more likely, his *Traité théorique et pratique* on the art of wine and vinegar making.<sup>97</sup> These were the books ordered, but we don't know what else was read in this busy and convivial family where the reading and writing of letters occupied the hours of leisure. Did they borrow fiction from the *cabinet de lecture*? They must have read and passed around the *Journal du Var*, and the papers from Paris which the Elder read at his *cercle*, or at home as we shall see later. There is no mention of reading in his letters home from Gréoux-les-Bains, the nearby Spa where he took the waters with his daughter, and where Pauline Bonaparte had been twice before them. He mentioned walks, card games, and gossip, but not books as remedies for his boredom there; yet the Spa brochure advertised an Assembly room and a *cabinet de lecture* offering "the most widely read newspapers".<sup>98</sup> We know the facilities there were in the town for the would-be reader;<sup>99</sup> the Public Library was round the corner from the Caussemilles with its 10,000 volumes, and so was the *cabinet de lecture*. It is very likely that the family used them, but from their

<sup>97</sup> Jean-Antoine Chaptal was also a minister of Interior under Napoleon, and in 1801 was the author of a *Projet de loi sur l'Instruction Publique*.

<sup>98</sup> ADV, 5J1.

<sup>99</sup> See chapter 3.

correspondence all we know is that, in their moments of leisure, the Caussemilles read and played music, and letters from the children or between them contain requests for music scores or thanks for those received from the rest of the family, as well as their commentaries about the music itself. Music was a common culture which they could communicate about, and which like writing was one of the avenues of continuity between private and public sphere: they played together as a family and participated in the town musical activities, like the town's theatre orchestra, and friendly music societies.<sup>100</sup>

How did this family 'voice', then, educated into writing, express the private sphere of commerce and family, the commerce of hearts and minds? In spite of their sense of the importance of writing, they probably would not have produced such a dense correspondence, and moreover kept it, without the necessities of the family trade which was so much part of the whole extended family life. Trade needed writing for its survival and progress, and so did the family. Even those who were not yet involved, those at boarding school, wrote, not just because it was part of the curriculum of all respectable private schools, but because the pattern was set and family solidarity and honour depended on it. There were complaints and anxiety when the regularity of the correspondence was broken. Exchanges were frequent, often daily, and any break aroused speculations on the health and welfare of the writer: "I dreamt your cart had overturned, and Fanny could not sleep"<sup>101</sup> wrote Madame Caussemille to her husband, who had left two days before. The elder and younger Caussemilles exchange almost daily news about their shared business and the state of the market over the tense period of 1815: between 24 April and 1 June, the Elder sent 24 letters to his brother Jeannot who was touring the Rhône valley and the Lyon area to get orders from clients for soap. In July 1817, when her husband was away for eight days at the Beaucaire fair with his brother, Rosalie wrote five letters to

<sup>100</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol.3, p.273.

<sup>101</sup> ADV, 5J7, 26 July 1817.

him and one each to the children, and there are seven letters exchanged during that time between the Elder and the brother-in-law who was helping Rosalie back home.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, however, when the Elder was away at the Spa, the exchange was less frequent, probably because he was not in need of so much communication since he was not engaged in trade.

Each letter was a news bulletin on three main topics: health, family, and business, although it is artificial to separate them since most of the time the three were intimately connected. As Margaret Hunt says, the market “transcended the so-called ‘public sphere’ and went to the heart of family life”.<sup>103</sup> Rosalie occasionally teased out some of the business news and delegated one of the sons at home to deal with *les affaires*: “I leave it to the elder son to tell you more about business.” At other times, the children add their family news to their mother’s business letter.<sup>104</sup> Most of the Elder’s letters contain a long paragraph on *la cuite du savon*, the boiling of the soap and the colour and consistency of the batch at the end of the process, which are described at length as the operation, like the firing of pots, obviously had its surprises. The same solicitude is shown for the state of health of the writer and his correspondent as for the quality of the soap: “The new batch was very nice and soft.”<sup>105</sup> The health of the market and of their products is intertwined with the health of the various members of the family: “My father is in great pain, I fear they drug him too much. The sales are very slow, wheat is still very expensive...” or “I am delighted that you are in good health, I see you have paid 61 livres for the oil...”.<sup>106</sup> The precarious character of both trade and health at the time is balanced by the constancy of the correspondence, with its news which became history by the act of

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<sup>102</sup> ADV, 5J7.

<sup>103</sup> Hunt, M., *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780*, London, 1996, p.9

<sup>104</sup> ADV, 5J7, for instance 18 November 1819 or 16 October 1819.

<sup>105</sup> ADV, 5J7, for instance 24 April and 1 June 1815.

<sup>106</sup> ADV, 5J7, 22 July 1816, and 30 July 1817.



writing. One of the functions of the notables has been described as the conservation of a collective memory, of a familial, local, or national heritage.<sup>107</sup> In this sense, the Caussemilles elevated themselves through their correspondence to this status as much as, for instance, through the building of their 'modern' house in town.

However their level of consumption, another indicator of status, was modest, this partly through Provençal parsimony (combined with some Jansenist austerity?),<sup>108</sup> and partly because their means were modest. *Préfet* Fauchet stated in his *Statistiques* for the Var, collated in 1805, that "the taste for spending was modest because of the ancient parsimony of the Provençals ... but that with the increase in salaried employment in the local administration the taste for luxury in dress is developing although people in 1800 are poorer than in 1789 with the same income".<sup>109</sup> As we have seen, there were times of financial difficulty, and they had to set priorities. Education came first, and we have seen that for both parents and children this choice entailed big sacrifices, one of the most dire for the children being the sacrifice of their holidays at home, for when they went away to school, it was for a two solid years, with only occasional visits from parents, friends, or employees. The consumption of luxuries seems limited to a few bonnets, a black straw hat and a comb for Fanny, braces and hard crayons and good paper for Auguste, and silk to make stockings for the children because it is more hardwearing than cotton. Or there are occasional presents bought at fairs by the Elder: engravings for Auguste because he has been so helpful in the shop; he deserves more, but his father has already spent too much on other presents he had to make, like a violin for the elder son.

<sup>107</sup> Tudesq, A.-J., 'Le concept de "notable"', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée, Actes du Colloque bourgeoisies et notables en Méditerranée, 18e-19e siècles*, 46-47 (1993), pp.1-12.

<sup>108</sup> Jansenism had been strong in some areas of Basse-Provence, if not in Draguignan itself, in the neighbouring towns of Marseille, Toulon, Aix, Brignoles, Cotignac and Pignans. See Vovelle, M., *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris, 1976, pp.458-461 & 555.

<sup>109</sup> Fauchet, *Statistiques...*, p.170.

neckerchieves “for the men [family, friends, or workmen?] in winter”, fans for the aunties, curtain material and, finally, a gold watch for himself as he has given his own to his elder son.<sup>110</sup>

The consumption of health was obviously another priority, as Madame Caussemille constantly reaffirmed: “Your health is so precious.” Family doctors often figured in the list of people to greet back home. One of their few luxuries had been to follow the fairly new fashion for Spas, which has never died in France. Fanny, whose health was obviously deemed fragile, went twice to Gréoux-les-Bains: once with her aunt for 33 days when she took 18 baths,<sup>111</sup> and once with her father, who went as a consumer as well as a chaperone. This is all fairly modest, and traditional and simple family remedies seem to be the favoured ones: purges, herbal teas instead of coffee in periods of anxiety or vapours, and regular meals. Madame Caussemille was concerned that her husband might skimp on food when travelling: “Do not neglect your health, don’t skip a meal, especially at Beaucaire where one gets so over-heated.”<sup>112</sup> The care for the health of their pupils was a matter that schools liked to boast about. There is an entertaining letter from Fanny’s headmistress who proudly announces to her parents the arrival of “la crise heureuse” which, she added, will transform Fanny’s health for the better; then, a month later, things having not been quite so good, she wrote that Fanny was preparing herself for the “second epoch” with morning herb teas and warm footbaths. Fanny herself disagreed completely with the Head’s triumphalism, and complained to her father that “in spite of the arrival of the so-called *crise* my tummy ache is persisting”<sup>113</sup>. Fanny’s parents were worried and insisted that a doctor should be consulted, but the headmistress seemed to be reluctant to do so, probably out of embarrassment, although Fanny herself obviously had no qualms in discussing her ‘women’s

<sup>110</sup> ADV, 5J7, 30 July 1817.

<sup>111</sup> ADV, 5J7, Letter from Thérèse, July 1816.

<sup>112</sup> ADV, 5J7, 22 July 1816.

<sup>113</sup> ADV, 5J8, February 1821.

problems' with her father. Earlier in the century in Ireland, Bishop Edward Synge discussed with his daughter Alicia the matter of what he termed 'the critical period', encouraging her not to use *fausse délicatesse*, and to be as free about it as the French ladies who discussed with ease of their *ordinaires*.<sup>114</sup> This means that the taboos about the matter might not have been as strong as has been thought. Like most Provençal towns, Draguignan was well provided in medical practitioners, and people were quite willing to call upon their services, which might be one of the reasons, it has been suggested,<sup>115</sup> why they were more numerous than in the Northern half of France; the other possibility was that, because of the relative poverty of the area, doctors were more readily accepted among the ranks of the notables, an instance of the Provençal 'meritocracy' which we shall discuss later.

Throughout their correspondence, we see how the theme of patience runs through their business and family philosophy: patience in business and health, patience and care in writing. But when it came to receiving letters, these were so vital to family solidarity and continuance that patience here was no longer invoked. The Elder had not had a letter from his wife in the Saturday mail, which meant he had to wait till the following week: "One is far from the objects of one's love, and work is not always according to one's wishes ... and it becomes impossible to bear the silence of those whose letters bring so much pleasure", and he then returns to the subject of the fair where his potential buyers also waited, but for the prices to go down.<sup>116</sup> The family must be kept together when some of its members were away and, apart from very rare escapades and trips to the Spa, the 'family conversation' is broken only through the necessities of the trade. When we consider the world of the Caussemilles, we see how theirs was one that lived with the ebb and flow of the seasons of the land, where

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<sup>114</sup> Legg, M.-L., ed., *The Synge Letters 1746-1752*, Dublin, 1996, pp.283-285 and 395.

<sup>115</sup> Goubert, J.P., Rey, R., Bertrand, & J., Laclan, A., *Atlas de la Révolution française*, vol.7: *Médecine et Santé*, Paris, 1993, pp.23 and 25.

<sup>116</sup> ADV, 5J7, 30 July 1817.

their life was associated with the availability of the products of the Provençal market economy, but transcended by a wider commercial and social outreach and a strong belief in education. As Agulhon says, education and the use of the French language in Provence paved the way to the membership of a middle rank.<sup>117</sup> In the 1800s, *Préfet* Fauchet was of the same opinion: “By their education, artisans and traders were close to the citizens of the first rank.”<sup>118</sup> If the private sphere of commerce, family, and health was so much of a whole, it was one open also to the public sphere of sociability, a whole which gave the Caussemilles a place amongst the ‘first rank’ of Draguignan.

The correspondence contains only passing references to the world of politics because, as Monsieur Leroy, then *Préfet* of the Var, says in answer to the Minister of the Interior’s questions for the 1813 survey on the *esprit public*: “The traders think only of their trade.”<sup>119</sup> This view was fairly widespread at the time: merchants were seen as lacking in public spirit and to be devoted only to their purses.<sup>120</sup> The Elder himself defined his attitude to public life: “I am not worried and cannot complain of any rumours and gossip against me. My submission to the law is well known, as well as my dislike for public positions. I am not therefore an object of envy for anybody. Woe to those in the public eye.”<sup>121</sup> The head of family was playing it safe, especially as this was the time of a royalist agitation in the town, just after the return of Napoleon from Elba. Yet, in the same letter, he advised his brother Jeannot , to remain for as long as he could in Lyon where he was doing business for

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<sup>117</sup> Agulhon, *La vie sociale...*, pp.475-76.

<sup>118</sup> Fauchet, *Statistiques...*, p.183.

<sup>119</sup> Poupé, E., *Enquête ministérielle sur l’esprit public dans le Var en août 1813*. Draguignan, 1911.

<sup>120</sup> Scott, W., ‘The urban bourgeoisie in the French Revolution: Marseille, 1789-92’ in Forrest, A. & Jones, P., eds., *Reshaping France, Town, Country and Region during the French Revolution*, Manchester, 1991, pp.86-104.

<sup>121</sup> ADV, 5J7, 29 May 1815.

the firm, although the town of Draguignan was generally in favour of the Emperor. The Elder himself called him “Our brave Emperor”, and two days later he wrote to his brother about the town putting the tricolour flags out and the streets being full of people and music and shouts of *Vive l’Empereur*; but he stayed prudently at home to watch it all from his window.<sup>122</sup> He described as “old windbags” these “men of the Revolution who send their children to the streets to dance the farandole and provoke the so-called royalists. I don’t see any royalists but turncoats who are after positions”.<sup>123</sup> Commerce cannot but be affected one way or another by political upheavals, yet, paradoxically, most of the rare references to the world of politics are to be found in the Caussemille’s business letters sent to their clients from Year 4 (1796) to the 1820s, in the beautifully copied hardbound books which extend over almost a century up to 1889. When both brothers were doing their military service in 1799-1800, Dalmas, their partner in the firm at the time, wrote to a client: “We hope that the happy events in Paris [the return of Bonaparte from Egypt, and his coming into power as Consul] will bring us peace. We yearn for this happy moment when we will be able to have our two famous artillerymen back [the two Caussemille brothers]. May we have peace in the land so that commerce can thrive again with a just and unshakable government. These must be the sincere wishes of the friends of the Republic.”<sup>124</sup> In fact the firm sent offers of money for Bonaparte’s Egyptian campaign, so the Elder could write to a client in 1806 when the firm, now parted from Dalmas, began to expand: “Our Emperor will not forget our firm which offered him so much help towards his campaign and which will never cease to be of use to him.”<sup>125</sup> In 1806 he again wrote to a client: “I hear that Peace is concluded. I hope to God that it will last. It will need nothing less than the influence of the happy

<sup>122</sup> ADV, 5J7, 1 June 1815.

<sup>123</sup> ADV, 5J7, 29 May 1815. The farandole was often used as a semi aggressive political taunt in Provençal towns by young men against young men of a different political camp.

<sup>124</sup> ADV, 5J28, 22 November 1799 (2 frimaire Year 8).

<sup>125</sup> ADV, 5J33, 2 January 1806.

genius of our Emperor.”<sup>126</sup> But he criticised, in another letter, the conscription perpetrated ruthlessly by Napoleon’s government: “These young men are so many victims sacrificed to France...”, although 1806 was the year of the Peace with the enemies of the Republic, and Napoleon was the guarantor of the acquisitions made during the Revolution, especially the purchase of *biens nationaux* which profited people like the Caussemilles.<sup>127</sup> The dark year of 1815, however, brought the world of politics into the business letters more than any other period. The political upheavals were not judged, but only referred to as “the circumstances” or “the events”. These forced him to stop all his manufactories: business is nil, he complained, or “in a stupor”, and he added: “Another ineffectual (*vicié*) State has succeeded the previous one, but our role and duty is obedience and we shall not stray from it; yesterday’s *Gazettes* feed the minds of those who meddle in politics, diplomacy, and constitutional matters. But let us see to the business of commerce and not of government.” The same day he wrote to another client in the same vein: “We have received the papers from Paris, and they excite the reasoners in politics furiously ... it is to be feared that war will break out soon. The trade in foodstuff is very sluggish, please let me know the rate of exchange.” A day later he wrote: “France is in a mess again and commerce is paralysed. It is really unpleasant.” The affirmation therefore is that business must go on no matter what, and when the world of politics hinders it, it is ‘unpleasant’; but commerce cannot be part of the public sphere of politics. There are enough hints, however, at the private sphere of personal political opinions tactfully transferred, at times, to the ‘reasoners’ and the ‘meddlers’. The Elder no doubt espoused the Lyon trader-manufacturers moderate republican liberalism, and their desire for order which had led them to rebel against the Paris Convention in the dark years of the Terror,<sup>128</sup> and this is probably why he sent his

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<sup>126</sup> ADV, 5J33, 11 January 1806. This remark about the Emperor seems in contradiction with the desire for peace, but, in spite of the disturbances of the wars and of the blockade, Napoleon must have been seen first and foremost as the guarantor of property, especially that acquired during the Revolution as *bien national*.

<sup>127</sup> ADV, 5J33, 20 February 1806.

brother there during ‘the troubles’ of the Hundred Days in 1815. He advised him “to remain quietly in Lyon, because here there is agitation. The troops have left us under the protection of the national guards. Vinegar is being requisitioned”.<sup>129</sup> The Elder might also have had sympathies for the constitutional monarchism of Siéyès, his compatriot and fellow pupil at Draguignan’s College,<sup>130</sup> if we are to judge from his interest in the history of England. After all, then, we might speculate that the Caussemilles were among those described by the *Police Générale* in their letter to the *Préfet* asking him to write daily about the *esprit public* in the Var: “The Fall of Tyranny...has been witnessed with great joy by the enlightened class, by all honest people, in short by those who are truly inspired by their love for the public good.”<sup>131</sup>

It was not against the interests of the trade to be part of the ‘true’ public sphere, that of the clubs and associations, and there we do find the name Caussemille. To belong to a *cercle*, a club, was a way of belonging to the network of influence and recognition in the town, a way of establishing oneself amongst the notables. These *cercles* and their radical counterparts, the *chambrées*, which had begun to appear before the Revolution, were thriving again under the Empire, and even more so during the Restoration. They were supposed to be only for friendly and pleasurable purposes, but the Emperor was suspicious and, with rules and regulations, tried to keep them under control. As in England, they had to be registered with the local authorities, together with a list of their members; and politics and gambling were forbidden. In both *cercles* and *chambrées*, newspapers were read, card games were played, and wine was drunk — so much so that, on 10 July 1810, there had to be a warning from the *Préfet* Azémar that the revenue from the tax on alcohol had fallen

<sup>128</sup> See Benoît, B., ‘Histoire, mémoire et identité politique: l’exemple de Lyon’, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 305 (1996), pp.491-510.

<sup>129</sup> ADV, 5J7, 6 May 1815.

<sup>130</sup> *Livre d’or du Collège de Draguignan*, Draguignan, 1910.

<sup>131</sup> ADV, 4M7, *Police politique*, 1809-1814.

dramatically due to the rising number of *chambrées*, and that these would therefore have to pay a tax on alcohol like other public places where drinks were served: if they did not pay they would be closed by the police.<sup>132</sup> One of the numerous surveys ordered by Napoleon's administration in 1811 was indeed an inquest on the *cercles* and *chambrées* in the Empire and, as Agulhon says, the Var file was the thickest of all the Departments.<sup>133</sup> The most bourgeois of the four reported *cercles* in Draguignan was the *cercle de la Maison Caussemille*, comprising local authority officers, lawyers, landowners, and only four *négociants* out of the 42 members.<sup>134</sup> However, in a letter to the treasurer of the *cercle* dated 29 October 1816,<sup>135</sup> Caussemille complains that he has not been paid the rent since 1815, and that the members often meet informally in his commercial premises to great inconvenience to himself. This would shed a different light on the prestigious *cercle*: to a certain extent, it was business to Caussemille, and also, he objected to those who had the leisure to come and discuss in his manufactory while he was trying to go about his trade. The *cercle de la Maison Clément*, in Caussemille's brother-in-law's house, had a more modest clientele of traders, landowners, shopkeepers and artisans. In the 1820s, the two young Caussemilles brothers, who lived at home, belonged to the *Jeune Cercle*, an exclusive club probably of royalist sympathies with only 14 members, according to a list dated 11 January 1820.<sup>136</sup> From the correspondence between the two brothers, it would seem that Jean-Henri, the elder brother, was a fairly vocal royalist, and that he even participated in one of the farandoles of which his father disapproved. But this time it was an anti-Jacobin farandole, so that his brother Alexandre wrote from Lyon that he was glad his brother had had a good time

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<sup>132</sup> ADV, 4M7, *Police politique*, 1809-1814, 23 April 1814. This request of the Paris administration came after what it called the "happy changes which have taken place in Paris since the 1st April", that is the abdication of Napoleon in favour of Louis XVIII.

<sup>133</sup> Agulhon, *La vie sociale...*, p.419.

<sup>134</sup> AN, F7/8779, Var; see also Agulhon, *La vie...*, p.421.

<sup>135</sup> ADV, 5J1.

<sup>136</sup> ADV, 5J1.



during the celebrations for the birthday of the Duke of Bordeaux, a member of the Bourbon family; that farandoles, balls, music, and fireworks, were alright, but not the vocal abuse with which his brother and his group attacked the Jacobins: “I am a royalist like you but I keep it quiet.”<sup>137</sup> The *Société des amateurs dramatiques et lyriques* was much less exclusive: 99 members in 1820, and entirely devoted to the pleasures of music and the theatre. The Elder was a member already in 1791, and in 1816 had the responsibility of buying a quantity of musical instruments for it. In 1822 his sons were on the list of members and paid their subscription of three francs.

This associative life allowed Jean-Pierre Caussemille, and later his sons even more so, into organisations which had power and influence: between 1819 and 1821, and in the 1830s, he was president of the tribunal of commerce created in the town in 1810; and in 1819 the *Préfet* created the *Société d’Agriculture et de Commerce* and made him a resident member.<sup>138</sup> Finally, like many notables, he became a permanent member of the administrative body of the local hospice, and was, like James Bisset in Leamington, an active member of the Draguignan masonic lodge, *La Parfaite Réunion*, a lodge founded in 1802 by a majority of *négociants*, but also with a few men of property, artisans and some local administrators.<sup>139</sup> Caussemille spoke and wrote French, which enabled him to fulfil another role of the notable, that of ‘mediator’ between the local community and the authority at the regional and national level.<sup>140</sup> As we have seen, it was he who wrote to the mayor to protest about the proposal to move the corn market to a less central position. It was he who sent information to the *Préfet* about the movement of wheat and salt in the area, or made a written proposal for a better ventilation for the public ward in the hospital.<sup>141</sup> This

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<sup>137</sup> ADV, 5J8, 13 May 1821.

<sup>138</sup> ADV, 5J1, October 1819.

<sup>139</sup> Mireur, *Les rues...*, vol. 3, p.270, and for the lodge see a note on ‘Membres sous le Consulat d’une loge maçonnique de Draguignan’ in *Le Var Historique et Géographique*, 76 (1938).

<sup>140</sup> Tudesq, ‘Le concept de “notable”’, *Cahiers...*, pp.1-12.

public role was one in which Madame Caussemille could participate: she might well have been admitted to the *cercle*, as women sometimes were, and active in public philanthropy, like her sister-in-law Thérèse, although with less leisure to do so. The notables were men, but she was an active participant in other aspects of the public sphere, and we have seen her full and far from secondary role in the family business. She loved the promenade, a social occupation made more pleasurable from the early years of her married life by the building by *Préfet* Azémar of the Esplanade (which still bears his name), and tree lined avenues. The Elder wrote to his brother: “We promenaded for an hour along the *Allées*. Miette [his brother’s wife] was with us.” The whole town must have been out as it was celebrating the feast of Saint-Hermentaire, its patron saint. In a letter to her husband, Madame Caussemille wrote: “I promise myself a promenade on your return”, and another time she complained, from Marseille where she was staying with her brother-in-law, that he was not joining them for the promenade.<sup>142</sup> As in England, the promenade was a public show of family togetherness and stability, a display, a live ‘conversation piece’. There is never a mention of any sense of class identity in the parents’ correspondence, except when Rosalie expostulates against those she calls “bourgeois de village” whom she accuses of usurious practices. The children, on the other hand, while at their boarding schools, away from the conviviality of the market square and the extended family, seem to have developed a sense of their separateness from those they saw every day in the shop, in the manufactory, in the street, or at the promenade. Alexandre described to his mother the visit of one of the firm’s carriers with whom he talked to in his home town’s *patois*: “You will laugh at the thought that I had a meal with a *voiturier*... I kissed him and shook his hand many times, and yet he is a man of low birth.”<sup>143</sup> In October 1819, Fanny complained to her father that the headmistress of her pension made “great fuss of the pupils from noble families” but that she neglected the others: “I don’t care” she added, “we get on

<sup>141</sup> ADV, 5J1, 1812.

<sup>142</sup> ADV, 5J7, 20 May 1815; 16 October 1819.

<sup>143</sup> ADV, 5J8, 5 February 1821.

amongst our group where we all are only military, lawyers, or traders (sic). We are real sisters to each others and we ignore the attention given to the others. I am not miserable but I shall be glad to be back home in April.” This experience developed her sense of belonging to the middle rank; this consciousness might have inspired her irritation at her wet nurse’s visits to her boarding school and she showed some impatience at the visit: “My *mère nourrice* has been to bring news from you and will come back because she wants me to write a letter for her. I don’t know what to do. I am tired of her and I hear she is going to stay a few months in this town. I don’t know whether she will get any work.”<sup>144</sup> As to Thérésou Caussemille, the Elder’s sister, she could be described as definitely belonging to the class of independent philanthropic women of property, very involved in charitable work for the prisoners at the local jail.<sup>145</sup>

In 1811, the *Police Générale de Paris* asked the *Préfets* for a *statistique personnelle* of the most notable, mostly noble, heads of family in order to “form a moral picture of the nation”.<sup>146</sup> This request met with some passive resistance from the *Préfets*, who had to be pushed. The *Préfet* of the Var eventually produced seven names, all nobles, mostly new. Of course Caussemille was not amongst them, but in the 1820s and 1830s, when his children’s education was completed and they could all work for the firm, he was classified by the tax office amongst some of the most important tax payers in the town.<sup>147</sup> In 1819, he was already in the public eye, as we have seen when he became a resident member of the *Société d’Agriculture et de Commerce*, and when the *Préfet* wrote to him that he “undoubtedly could not make a better choice considering the zeal towards the public good which animates you”.<sup>148</sup> Then, in 1833, he was officially among the ‘trading notables’, *the notables*

<sup>144</sup> ADV, 5J8, 13 May 1821.

<sup>145</sup> ADV, 2J149, Thérésou Caussemille Papers, 1814.

<sup>146</sup> ADV, 1M 14 1.

<sup>147</sup> ADV, 5J1, 8 January 1832.

*commerçants*, and considered qualified to participate in the election of the judge of the Tribunal of Commerce; and in those later years, because he must have relinquished some of his business responsibilities into the hands of his children, he forgot his dislike of public positions and entered the municipal council, to which he was called by the mayor to the session of May 1832.<sup>149</sup> This upward trend into public life was to be followed by his sons who also went into public office in the 1840s and 1850s.

The male members of the Caussemille family might not have been traditional *notables* but only *notables commerçants*, an echelon they had reached through their successful trading and manufacturing; but they owed their position in the public sphere of notables, in which they participated with “zeal”, to their education, which made up for their lack of land, or great fortune, or noble origins. They are typical of the *notables capacitaires*,<sup>150</sup> a class whose notability derived from their capacities or *talents*, a Provençal variation of the notable. This phenomenon was proclaimed in 1813 in a speech by the deputy *Préfet* of the Var: “Gentlemen, that consideration, owed to merit only, is spreading step by step to the extremities of the Empire.”<sup>151</sup> It could be said that the meritocracy installed by Napoleon was already a fairly traditional feature of Basse Provence. The Caussemilles fit the ‘concept of notable’ and their four ‘dimensions’ according to Tudesq:<sup>152</sup> they are family men, well rooted in their town and their area; their economic status gives them the right to vote and to be present in organisations which have power; they fit the ‘socio-political dimension’ as they did act as mediators and helped in decision making within the locality and the

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<sup>148</sup> ADV, 5J1, 5 October 1819.

<sup>149</sup> ADV, 5J1. Caussemille might have also been more willing to serve under the constitutional monarchy of the Orleans family!

<sup>150</sup> Rinaudo, Y., ‘Notables, culture, et associations en Provence 18e siècle - 20e siècle’, *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 46-47 (1993), pp.97-110.

<sup>151</sup> ADV, 4M7, *Police Politique*, 1809-1814, 13 June 1813.

<sup>152</sup> Tudesq, ‘Le concept de “notable”’...

region; finally, their education gave them social and cultural power as manipulators of the written word and of the French language, letter-writers, readers of newspapers, and members of societies. Unlike the Watkins, a family of cotton traders in Manchester in the 1820s-1830s described by Howard Wach,<sup>153</sup> the Caussemilles succeeded in blending their lives in the private and public domain. Is it because they didn't physically separate, at least not to a great extent, their private and public spaces as their British counterparts did? And/or was the extended family structure they belonged to more conducive to their success in keeping the two spheres well integrated, to make them full participants in the urban culture of their time?

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<sup>153</sup> Wach, H.M., 'Civil society, moral identity and the liberal public sphere: Manchester and Boston 1810-1840', *Social History*, 21 (1996), pp.281-303.

## Appendix I

I have endeavoured to respect the original punctuation, capitalisation, and style in my translation of the following letters.

1-Letter from Caussemille *Aîné* [the Elder] to his wife Rosalie from Beaucaire [where he is attending the fair], 25 July 1817.

Here I am, my Dear Friend, to pay my usual tribute to your tender impatience by giving you No 2 of my Beaucaire Diary.

First, I am well and my right Arm is a bit less painful because I wrapped myself better last night. I slept to my heart's content although I woke up many times and got up early.

We went to the Stalls to swallow a few hectograms of dust. We did not come out of them without weighing their square and round Hammers (*Martinets*) and the Iron [wares], which I thought I should do. I ordered a second Cart for the Hammers, the Steel wares, the round Vats, the Lids still at 30L a quintal. I shall get them to you together with 85 Chimney Backs and 42 Sheets of metal. Tonight I'll send on the road the Iron, the Nails, the Hemp and the wire vegetable Baskets (*Paniers potagers*) It will be all I have done and probably all I will do in ironmongery.

The Iron will go for 25L retail. We shall pay a bit less with Dalmas, but we must sell at 27L. It has been agreed. The Iron will cost us 25.10 to 25.16. You can base yourself on that. The Hammers did not cost me more than last year. [Illegible details of prices for chimney backs and steel ware follows]

The Hemp from Bourgoin which cost 75L yesterday is 78L today. I don't know about the Grenoble [hemp] but I reckon that it will be better. I have not had time to deal with it because I have to think of so many things. I'll see this afternoon.

Sales have started again in Drapers shops but without any rise however. Colonial

wares are the goods that sell best. It is thought that it will not be so in the interior [the rest of France as opposed to Provence].

The Soaps which have arrived sell at 70L for the white and 61-62 for the pale. There is a lot still due but it is detained at Arles by Contrary Winds. This is sad for the owners, yet it is possible that this mishap will bring me a few commissions. But for the moment everybody wants to wait and see. I have secured only 4q [about a hundredweight] of White [soap] and 10q of Pale. I hope it won't be all but buyers do not seem very inclined to pass orders.

Oil is scarce and kept at 100L per q. The Lyon people have a need for it, but they find our prices too high at 60. It is quite possible that they will go for the Turin oils at Marseille. Our good quality ones tempt them however. We won't have enough for the Languedoc buyers. Many carts have already gone to our place to load. So be prepared and go for 60, 60.10 or 15 up to 61. I think we could earn 20L at this last price. I allow myself to believe that we might even reach 63 by the end of August. So go for it go for it I beg you, and do as I tell you. The Harvest will be almost nil in these Areas. You know that ours gives only a small yield, that we have no provision and that a lowering of the prices is impossible, unless something unpredictable happens. I shall hear with pleasure tomorrow that you have managed to do something.

Now I turn to Corn. The Sheaves (*Faisselles*) go for 60L and all the Merchants of the area are dumbfounded. As far as I am concerned I have made up my mind to pay that price because of their beautiful quality, if I get there in time, because yesterday I was in Tarascon and there they were already asking 62. This article will go on being dear in spite of what they say. At least that's my opinion. I shall not rush into it but 200 bushels of good and beautiful quality would quite please me. See if you can get some information at Aups [a town north-west of Draguignan].

At Tarascon I did not find kind Sister Josephine [a nun who might have been at Draguignan's hospital in the past]. She has left the Institution and has been sent to Grenoble I believe. I confess it really pained me. Mme Bleirad who was so kind and lively has died, another subject of grief for me who had known her for 20 years and

had received so many proofs of friendship. Women of her character and of yours my dear should never die and keep their husbands for ever, for I must speak for myself a little.

The elder [son] keeps well and conducts himself well. I leave him the pen for him to write a few words. Give my endless Compliments to my dear Brother-in-law Clément, to Nanette [his sister Anne], to my Sister [his unmarried sister Thérèse] and to all our good relatives and friends without forgetting our dear Doctor. I kiss our dear Auguste and his good mother of whom I am the very dear and ever faithful Husband.

Caussemille Ainé

TSVP [PTO]

My dear Mama

I am writing these few words to you to inform you of our safe arrival in this town and to be remembered to you although I do not doubt your love for me.

Give my compliments to my brother auguste (sic), to Fanny and to my uncle Clément, auntie Clément, Clarisse [his cousin], finally to all the family. Business is not going as well as we would wish but we run about all day long with my dear papa.

I leave you with regret and kiss you with all my heart. your devoted son

Caussemille fils Ainé

[This letter shows that the elder son did listen to his father's reproach that he was using too many capitals, but over-reacted and now does not use them when he should!]



## Appendix II

Marseille the 16 September 1819

My dear and good friend

I have received with deep pleasure your dear letter of 11 instant which announces the continuation of your good health and that of our dear children I advise you to eat well to sustain your present weight, your health is so precious to us that you must not do anything to alter it as you are the first beneficiary, as to me be reassured that I feel very well I think I have put on weight What grieves me is to see that you are badly served by Clairon [a domestic servant], Fanny is still the same that is she is sad she speaks often of you and longs to see you, the christening took place on Tuesday morning and dear Miette [sister-in-law] is now out of her lie-in period and is well [...], now let's talk about oils they are in a bad way here Jeannot [brother-in-law] told me that they did not sell whatever the price, he his working hard cereals remain calm, when you come you will see what's to be done about these items which will give us very little profit this year, I went to *aba* [?] yesterday and found that sugar and coffee had gone up I have chosen a few boxes you have to pay for a good coffee 36 [? livres] not as good a price as our dear Friend [*Compère*] has given us 23 L for refined sugar with paper and it's not good quality. Jeannot had a commission for ten hundredweights of refined sugar we could not get it for 23 in the factory, in the retail shops we could get two three hundredweights but that would not satisfy the commission Funel [a carrier] has arrived at last he had postponed his journey for us so we retained some of his pay he really deserves it. Our dear Friend is getting ready to go to Aix tonight where he will be near his family, its no use me envying him and like you I arm myself with patience. you ask in your letter of the 13 whether I have been to the theatre well My Dear so far it has not been mentioned the Friend would have been scandalised he is always running around for his business and he has never offered to take me out except a few evenings when he has nothing else to do, then he will go out to the promenade with us, he has left his politeness at home all this

between ourselves do not show my letter to Thérésou [her husband's sister] I could tell you much more but you know that I am better with my tongue than with my pen. Jeannot will deal with the commission the price of 15 L is tentative if the quality is good. I hear you are selling a lot of salt I hope that what you ordered reaches you soon, I am anxious that you might run out of it [...] Miette sends an infinity of nice regards to you all give my Compliments to our Dear Doctor tell him I congratulate him on the cure he has just accomplished. do not forget to remember me to doctor ardisson and his wife to auntie Clément [another of her husband's sister] baby Gay Jaufrette Mymother brother sister in brief all the relatives and friends Mr. Muraire and you all my dear children I kiss you from the depth of my heart and encourage you to support your dear papa in the factory and in the shop. farewell my Dear friend I now leave the pen to your Dear Daughter Fanny who wants to have a chat with you. I kiss you a million times and am for life your affectionate spouse Girard-Caussemille

My dear papa

It is high time I had a chat with you although I do it all the time and I yearn for the happy day when I shall be able to give you a hug I have found the town of Marseille much more lively than last time the fair attracted a lot of people every evening there were wonderful dresses yesterday we went for dinner to uncle guerin when we had finished we went on the promenade, on the cannebière, we went into a stall where we were shown the whole Marseille avenue [a magic lantern show or a telescope?] the port and stranded vessels and frigates well I had a great time then Porinchinelle [*sic*] who beat his wife because she did not come when called. Little cousin would have stayed all night [...]

Give my compliments to auntie Thérésou, to auntie Clément to Clarisse to Victoire to granma to my very dear brothers and all the people who take an interest in me.

I am for life your very affectionate and devoted daughter Fanny Caussemille

## Chapter 5

### **The Bissets and the written word as a commodity in Leamington and Warwick**

The Bisset family came from Birmingham to settle outside Warwick, in what was still the village of Leamington Priors before it became Royal Leamington Spa in 1838. To us, now, the family has only one voice: that of its head James Bisset (1761-1832), although he tells us that, of his four children, his two daughters wrote home almost daily from their schools. Fortunately James Bisset had a strong sense that family history should be imparted to his children and their descendants, and the result of this commitment to the family is his ‘Memoirs of myself written for my grandchildren’, of which we have the manuscript version as well as a printed and edited version published 86 years later by a local historian.<sup>1</sup> We have to take his Memoirs at their face value and listen to his voice, bearing in mind that he admits: “The whole of these Memoirs I have written in toto, in two days, without any previous consideration.” In addition, Bisset wrote his ‘Reminiscences’ in eight exercise books which, in spite of his recommendations to his daughter Jemima to whom they were dedicated — “To save your dad’s credit, I prithee take heed, do not lend them (as usual) for Neighbours to read” — were fortunately preserved for posterity to cast an indiscrete eye over.<sup>2</sup> Finally, his Commonplace Book provides voices from his friends and admirers, and includes the only letter we have from one of his daughters; and the Matthew Boulton Papers contain a few letters exchanged between Boulton and Bisset.<sup>3</sup> Of the family, therefore, we mainly have this autobiography and

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<sup>1</sup> Bisset J., ‘Memoirs of myself written for my grandchildren’, WCRO, CR/1563/246; for easy reference the edited text (Dudley, T.B., *Memoir of James Bisset*, Leamington, 1904) will be quoted hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> WCRO, CR 1563/247-253 and 258-260, ‘Reminiscences’.

<sup>3</sup> Commonplace Book, 1800-1805, Birmingham Archives, 184534 IIR20; Matthew Boulton

reflections on 58 years of his life by James Bisset. This in contrast with the Caussemille family who provide us with a polyphonic chronicle of family life and affairs.

The voice of the family is weak, but that of the head of the family is loud and clear — and it had to be, just as it had to be for the Caussemilles — for writing was an essential tool of his trade during Bisset's time as a japanner in Birmingham, and even more so when he turned to writing as a saleable commodity which he had to manufacture in order to keep himself and his family afloat and out of poverty, when times were hard for manufacturers of fancy goods. His published writing is extensive and tells us much about the social and political culture of the time, the culture Bisset was catering for. But his own, as we shall see later, was at an interesting juncture between 'high' and 'low' culture, when popular and emerging middle class cultures had not become separated (but has it ever been so?). He wrote countless ballads and doggerel verses, as well as literature for the 'reading classes', to use Benedict Anderson's felicitous label,<sup>4</sup> or should we say the consuming classes? It is for them that he produced his guides and children's tales. In many respects, the Bissets, like the Caussemilles, were not the 'typical' bourgeois family of the period. If both families made their mark in the public sphere of their town, it is through their ease with the written word, rather than through social rank, wealth, or political power.

The early part of James Bisset's life and that of his family has already been documented elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> His early life up to the age of 15 was spent in Scotland.

Papers, Birmingham Archives, 221/81-90.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities*, London, 1983, p.75.

<sup>5</sup> Davidoff, L., & Hall, C., *Family Fortunes, Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, pp.416-420, and Berg, M., 'Inventors of the world of goods' in Bruland, K., & O'Brien, P.K., *From Family Firm to Corporate Capitalism*, Oxford, 1998, pp.21-50.

mostly in Perth where he was born, and in Auchtermuchty where he went to school while living at his maternal uncle's. Like Jean-Pierre Caussemille, he came from a trading family, and both his father and paternal uncle were merchants, but his father's trade overseas collapsed with the successive loss of his cargoes, bringing ruin to the family.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the Caussemille brothers and sisters, he and his brothers had to fend for themselves in their different ways, mainly outside the family network of support. The oldest brother was brought up as a 'writer', which, for traders, meant that he was trained to enter the 'professions': he became an attorney. His second brother set up as a merchant in Birmingham. Thus the "one large family" in Perth,<sup>7</sup> which he describes as affectionate and friendly, was disseminated around the kingdom. Bisset did not entirely lose his roots, as he kept in touch with his family by correspondence and visits.<sup>8</sup> The Bisset family, like the Caussemilles, also saw education as important; that is why his parents, being unable to afford schooling, sent him to his maternal uncle, the Reverend Charles Wilson. Then he came to Birmingham in 1776, aged 15, to be apprenticed in his brother's warehouse as an accountant, but he was not one for numbers and the dull life of the office and soon, still with his brother's support, he became apprenticed to a Thomas Bisset (no relation but an extraordinary coincidence), a japanner. It was when he met the beautiful Dorothy Horton (1759-1825) that he decided to set up on his own, having invented a successful technique for miniature painting on glass which, in 1783, gave him the means to marry her.

Dorothy Horton came from a family of small property owners. She had two married sisters, and a married brother who lived in the country north of Birmingham, at Elliot's Hall, a country house he had inherited from an uncle. Dorothy stayed in touch with them all when she became Mrs B., and the two families frequently visited and stayed with each other while the Bissets lived in Birmingham.<sup>9</sup> Dorothy

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<sup>6</sup> *Memoir...*, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> *Memoir...*, p.66.

<sup>8</sup> *Memoir...*, p.81.

Horton was described by her husband as a faithful and affectionate wife, as a “friend”<sup>10</sup> whose “mental abilities” he admired as much as her “exterior charms”, and as “a prudent and economical manager of a family”.<sup>11</sup> He was particularly thankful for this last feature, for he repeatedly informs us that he was not a very good accountant or organiser. They had ten children, of whom only the first four survived: Christiana, Jemima, James, and Charles.<sup>12</sup> Fernand Braudel remarks that contraception was widespread in France well before the rest of Europe in the eighteenth century, hence the very slow growth of its population in the early nineteenth century, while in England it increased by 100 per cent, even though contraception increased there in the mid-1830s.<sup>13</sup> It seems likely that the Caussemilles did use some form of control of fertility, unlike the Bissets. Yet, unlike the Caussemilles, the Bissets of our period were a nuclear family, typical of northern and western Europe, whose characteristic, as described by Laslett, is that “it is less common for kinsfolk to be present in the household as working members than it was in southern and eastern Europe”.<sup>14</sup> Another characteristic is that, because of limited opportunities within the family, the nuclear structure encourages the establishment of a network outside the family in order to survive.<sup>15</sup> The Bissets can be recognised

<sup>9</sup> ditto.

<sup>10</sup> We have seen that Caussemille and his wife call each other ‘friend’ too. The concept of friendship in marriage was very much a Protestant one, and probably also Jansenist.

<sup>11</sup> *Memoir...*, p.74.

<sup>12</sup> *Memoir...*, p.80.

<sup>13</sup> Braudel, F., *L'identité de la France*, vol.3, Paris, 1986, pp.174-185; Reay, B., *Microhistories: demography, society and culture in rural England, 1800-1930*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.13 & 64.

<sup>14</sup> Laslett, P., ‘Family and household as work group and kin group: areas of traditional Europe compared’, in Wall, R., ed., *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, Cambridge, (1983), pp.513-564, esp. p.528.

<sup>15</sup> Burguière, A., ‘Les “liens du sang”’. Marc Bloch, historien de la parenté’, in Atsma, H. & Burguière, A., *Marc Bloch aujourd'hui. Histoire comparée et Sciences sociales*, Paris, 1990, pp.389-402.

within that picture, which must be qualified by the fact that they had strong links with their respective families, especially those who lived in the Midlands, and who might well have helped them in their periods of financial difficulties.<sup>16</sup>

Much has been made about Bisset's active social life outside his home, relegating his wife to solitary domesticity;<sup>17</sup> but not enough that he in fact decided to reform his ways and become a domestic man, after making his excuse that "Birmingham people give themselves up very much to the public, and from a certain easiness of disposition, I gave myself very much up to the people".<sup>18</sup> This "certain easiness of disposition" meant that he was not an overbearing head of family either; he liked too much to be liked. No authoritarian paterfamilias says: "When my children went to school and met me by accident in the street, they used to seem as rejoiced as if they had not seen me for months although not separated above a few hours...I have often been dumbfounded on receiving such testimonies of seeming approbation..."<sup>19</sup> He praised his children for their "Health, Ease, and Competence",<sup>20</sup> and professed a very modern attitude of tolerance towards them; for example, wondering why they had not inherited his taste for the fine arts, he added that "I, however, left everything to the bent of their own genius". The youngest Bisset having decided to go to sea, he observed: "As he had made his own election, I did not thwart his own inclination."<sup>21</sup> This easygoing attitude is transparent in Bisset's outlook on religion and religious practice. He had had a strict, if affectionate, Presbyterian and Sabbatarian upbringing, especially when he was with his uncle, the minister. He spoke of his mother's piety with respect and affection, but said that "even when a

<sup>16</sup> For an argument against the "autonomous nuclear family", see Reay, *Microhistories...*, p.156.

<sup>17</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family...*, pp.417-418.

<sup>18</sup> *Memoir...*, p.79, and he adds, p.84, "I accordingly accustomed myself to spend most of my evenings at home in my own happy and domestic circle, and for several years before I left Birmingham, I was always to be found at my own fireside."

<sup>19</sup> 'Reminiscences', WCRO, CR 1563/258.

<sup>20</sup> *Commonplace Book*, 38-39.

<sup>21</sup> *Memoir...*, p.83.

child. I could not altogether coincide in her opinion respecting religion".<sup>22</sup> But when he married Dorothy, he accompanied her with great enthusiasm to her Anglican church, St Martins', because of its music and bells, a great novelty for him: "I was vastly delighted with the voluntaries on the organ by a Mr Harris. It was the first music I had ever heard played in a place of public worship, and I looked every moment for the parson and his clerk coming along the church aisle to their respective pulpits in jig time."<sup>23</sup> It is clear that he was not a very pious man and, as we shall see, he taught his children 'moral lessons' rather than giving them a religious education. Although he enjoyed church music, his leanings were more towards the Dissenters, among whom he had many friends and who were prominent in the world of culture in Birmingham. In his commonplace book, he noted that he had been "to a charity sermon at Meeting this forenoon".<sup>24</sup>

The Bissets did not have their residence in the centre, as did their French counterparts and the people that mattered in Draguignan; at least not to begin with. They started their family life at 3 Caroline Street, "the most Northerly house in Birmingham...neat and compact with two chambers",<sup>25</sup> which they rented for £8 per year. With the success of his manufactory of miniature painted glassware, fancy pictures, and alabaster ornaments, they were able to move to a much bigger house, recently built, but in the same street. For double the rent, they now had five 'chambers' or bedrooms, (like the Caussemilles), a parlour, sitting room, kitchen, and "a good garden".<sup>26</sup> This was where the Bissets started their museum of curiosities and a picture gallery, and these proved such a success that they had to move again to a new and larger house in New Street, "in the very centre of the town

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<sup>22</sup> *Memoir...*, p.69.

<sup>23</sup> *Memoir...*, p.32.

<sup>24</sup> *Commonplace Book*, 130.

<sup>25</sup> *Memoir...*, p.75.

<sup>26</sup> *Memoir...*, p.78.



where I opened an elegant shop in the fancy line".<sup>27</sup> Now they had made it, but not for too long, and circumstances forced them to move to Leamington in 1813; but their house there was not large enough for their museum collection, so they transferred it from Birmingham to three different locations in the town. In 1817, they finally moved to a house of their own which, like the Caussemilles, they had built to their requirements; and they named it, exotically for the time, Belle-Vue Place.<sup>28</sup> This last move could of course be described as following the pattern of the exodus of the middle-classes to the leafy suburbs. In the case of the Bissets, however, it was different: they did not move away from their work, they took it with them. If they too were looking for clean air, they also moved to where their work was, or rather to where their work might find buyers, where their museum and the other leisure activities they were ready to offer would have clients with plenty of leisure, and what better bet than a spa town for these?<sup>29</sup> They had the flair to move to where the culture industry was in its infancy but likely to develop, "having the great desire to contribute in some measure to the public amusements and advancement of a place rising so rapidly in reputation...".<sup>30</sup> They were not really venturing into unknown territory; Warwick was, after all, their county town and, while in Birmingham, James Bisset had established many connections in Warwick where he occasionally played billiards at the Castle, and socialised with like-minded masonic friends and with Independent Party sympathisers, who met at the Swan.<sup>31</sup> Once established in Leamington, he kept the Warwick connection by making "weekly excursions" to it, and would sometimes stay the night.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Memoir...*, p. 80.

<sup>28</sup> *Memoir...*, pp.86 & 88.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Mellows, in *The History of Guy's Lodge 1829-1929*, Leamington, 1929, p.12, confirms this vision: "When he visited Leamington in 1811...his discerning eye beheld the rising wave of development and prosperity approaching our leafy town."

<sup>30</sup> Bisset, J., *A Descriptive Guide to Leamington Priors*, 2nd ed., Coventry, 1816, p.30.

<sup>31</sup> 'Reminiscences', 250, 258, 259, 260; *Memoir*, pp.35-36.

<sup>32</sup> 'Reminiscences', 260.

Compared to the Caussemilles, the fragmentation and, with their numerous moves, the physical instability of the Bisset family made them fail two of the requirements of notability: a long established family presence in a stable and prominent setting.<sup>33</sup> Another requirement for those who aspired to belong to the people who mattered in the town was education, and that experienced by the Bissets was not dissimilar to that of the Caussemilles. Dorothy Horton very probably began with an education at home, like most esquires' children, followed by a year or two at one of the many boarding schools for girls in the Birmingham area. Being of the Church of England persuasion, she was unlikely to have had the benefit of one of the usually more enlightened dissenting schools, yet she must have had some useful schooling as she is the one who did the accounts for the family and kept them out of debt.<sup>34</sup> James Bisset started his education at a Dame school where, for half a penny a week, he learnt his letters in a horn book;<sup>35</sup> and at the same time he was taught the rudiments of Latin by his uncle, but these teachings were wasted when he then went to the 'Latin School' where he unlearnt what little his uncle had taught him. Like Caussemille the Elder, his secondary education was curtailed but, before he was apprenticed, he was sent to a drawing academy in Perth to learn writing, accounts, and especially drawing. By contrast, Caussemille had his 'useful' education after his apprenticeship, when he attended evening classes in mathematics and physics. Bisset's Scottish educational experience, when both his Dame school and his 'Latin school' were mixed schools, as well as his Birmingham experience of Dissenters' ideas on education, probably gave him a fairly egalitarian view of schooling for his daughters and sons.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>34</sup> 'Reminiscences', 259.

<sup>35</sup> *Memoir....*, p.67.

<sup>36</sup> *Memoir....*, pp.16-17.

Did the Bissets read Maria Edgeworth's *Early Lessons* and *The Parent's Assistant*, popular books on the education of children of the middling classes, or Erasmus Darwin's *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools*? It is quite likely, as both authors had connections with the Birmingham Lunar Society, whose members had very definite ideas about educational matters: they were great believers in useful education.<sup>37</sup> The heyday of the Lunar Society was the 1780s and early 90s, at the time when the Bissets were starting their family; these were also the heydays of radical Birmingham (a movement which came somewhat later in Warwick), when the Dissenters, especially the Unitarians, dominated the cultural life of the town. It is they who created the Birmingham Bookclub which, in turn, provided most of the founding members of Birmingham Public Library in 1779, and James Bisset was one of them.<sup>38</sup> The members of the Lunar Society believed that they could give the best education to their children at home; Darwin and Wedgwood were especially interested in the education of women, and organised a joint home school for their respective sons and daughters where they were taught writing, drawing, accounts, and French.<sup>39</sup> These pedagogical views must have been very appealing to the Bissets, whose four children had their first education at home, as probably did the Caussemille children. As evidence for this, we first have Bisset saying that his children's earliest lessons were under the direction of their mother and himself;<sup>40</sup> then a small engraving representing part of the family with a boy reading and a daughter looking at a geography book;<sup>41</sup> and finally

<sup>37</sup> See Lang, M., 'Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent Assistant* (1796): a document of social education', *History of Education*, 7 (1978), pp.21-33: Maria Edgeworth's father was a founder member of the Lunar Society. Maria and her father jointly published *Practical Education* which expressed a fairly radical pedagogy, though within the respect of social hierarchy. See also Schofield, R., *The Lunar Society of Birmingham*, Oxford, 1963.

<sup>38</sup> Money, J., *Experience and Identity. Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1800*, Manchester, 1977, pp.141-142.

<sup>39</sup> Schofield, *The Lunar...*, pp.131-132.

<sup>40</sup> *Memoir...*, p. 82, and p.83 too for most details of the children's education.

Bisset's own doggerel verses:

But my children to teach, moral lessons impart  
 Of course, as parent, lies nearest my heart  
 Some hours in a week, then, I hope you'll agree  
 At least to that purpose, devoted should be.<sup>42</sup>

The four of them went to the Dame School in Caroline Street where they first lived, and then, while the oldest daughter was sent for the canonical two years to Miss Baker's boarding-school in Moseley at age 14, Jemima the youngest stayed at Miss Lucretia Webb's school in Caroline Street. The oldest son also went to school in Birmingham, and when business at home became slack, he was apprenticed to a Birmingham glass maker. The youngest son seems to have been a bit of a rebel although an excellent scholar, according to his father: his parents tried many schools before establishing him as an apprentice at age 14 to Mark and Sunders Warehouse in Birmingham. He did not last long there and eventually, said his father, "takes French leave" to go into the Navy where he met an early death from the yellow fever in 1817. Therefore the Bisset children received an even less gendered education than their French counterparts, partly because their parents could not afford to send them away to school, and partly because they believed in home education which they could arrange better to provide, as both parents were more in control of their time. This was a fairly typical education in long eighteenth-century style: home and dame school, topped up by two years in secondary education. In 1804, the Bisset's oldest daughter Christiana wrote to her parents for the anniversary of their marriage in a formal and elegant hand, very similar to that of Fanny Caussemille: "What recompense can I possibly give you for the useful Education you have bestowed

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<sup>41</sup> Commonplace Book, pp.38-39.

<sup>42</sup> In Bisset's 'Address to the Reader' in his *Magnificent Guide to Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1808.

upon me?”<sup>43</sup> So the Bisset children’s education was not very different from that of the Caussemille’s children, 10 to 15 years later, except that the Younger Caussemille children, Alexandre and Fanny, prolonged their education by a year at their request, in the knowledge that, by then, their parents could afford it; except also that Fanny went away to boarding school at an age when both Bisset daughters, then 15 and 16 years old, were sent away, as were the Brönte sisters, to earn their living as ‘preceptresses’. They went to Mrs Dunn’s Seminary for Young Ladies, a boarding and day school in Erdington, “four pleasant miles away from Birmingham”. where they had the care of 52 children! The wrench away from home was not as bad as it would have been for the Bröntes or the Caussemilles: “We saw the dear girls often and heard from them daily”,<sup>44</sup> wrote their father and, unlike Fanny and Alexandre Caussemille, they spent their holidays at home or visiting their relatives. In both families, education was not bought so much to win their children a place in the better ranks, namely through joining the professions, but rather as an insurance for success in their trade and, by the same token, an improved social acceptability — a fairly modern attitude.

According to their father, his daughters found great pleasure in their work. They probably possessed his didactic bent for, as a good eighteenth-century member of the middling classes as described by Paul Langford,<sup>45</sup> James Bisset embodied the new trends towards benevolence, sympathy, and the desire to educate. When in Birmingham, he desired that his fellow apprentices should not miss an educational opportunity: “There was no public library in the year 1776 and the first books or Port-folio of prints that were lent out (gratis) to young Mechanics or Artizans were those of mine and many scores of neighbouring apprentices availed themselves of this opportunity, several of whom had never read any Book before unless when at

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<sup>43</sup> Commonplace Book, p.155.

<sup>44</sup> *Memoir...*, p.82.

<sup>45</sup> Langford, P., *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783*, Oxford, 1992, pp.481-499, and esp. p.481.

school, and many who had never been at school.”<sup>46</sup> This informal library was entirely free, and so was the Bisset’s Museum, at least in its early days, when it was still an “Elegant Museum Admission Gratis”,<sup>47</sup> before it became a bread-earning business. Like the members of the Lunar Society, and Dissenters in general, Bisset was a supporter of Sunday schools; according to Thomas Price Esq, a Birmingham magistrate, his moral tales, like *The Orphan Boy* or *The Converts*, placed him among those who were “at pain to humanize Mankind, to meliorate the condition of the lower orders and to check the torrent of Vice, [thus adding] to the stock of Public Happiness”.<sup>48</sup> And the Earl of Aylesford added in a letter to Bisset: “Popular ballads of immoral tendency have done infinite mischief...*The Converts* have a fair prospect of doing much good”, which is ironical as it was sent to someone who was also a ballad writer, and whose culture and language were not in the least divorced from the popular or ‘low’ culture, which the Earl despised. Even more enthusiastic praise for *The Converts* was given by “a zealous friend of the Sunday Schools” who ventured to “suggest that were it printed at the same rate and circulated by the same methods as the Books of the Cheap Repository, its good effect would be more extensive”.<sup>49</sup> In his writings, Bisset did not use the ‘Latin’ English as taught in grammar schools, but the ‘vulgar’ English of those books of grammar aimed at women, traders, and the youth, books that Olivia Smith describes in *The Politics of Language*.<sup>50</sup> Bisset’s hyperbolic style was sometimes more that of the fairground

<sup>46</sup> ‘Reminiscences’, 252.

<sup>47</sup> *Memoir...*, pp.64 & 80: “My Museum was open for public inspection, to which every person was admitted gratis. Nor would I ever allow of my servants to accept of any remuneration.”

<sup>48</sup> Commonplace Book, p.5; and in the same, we find a copy of the verses Will Hutton, publisher and local historian, sent Bisset after reading *The Converts*: “From Sunday Schools, when Boys come out / They’ll hate each evil thing / From Ned’s example there’s no doubt / But “Converts” soon will spring.”

<sup>49</sup> Commonplace Book, p.5.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, O., *The Politics of Language*, Oxford, 1984, pp.9-11, where she argues that Grammar,

than of the salon.

James Bisset's interest in education fitted in well with the family's establishment in Leamington where, as in other leisure towns, it was an important ingredient of the economy. Education for girls was especially well provided, as it was the girls who were more likely to accompany their parents, or just their mothers, to the spa, while the boys were having a less frivolous time in their grammar schools, public schools, or seminaries.<sup>51</sup> When Christiana, the elder Bisset daughter, became a widow, she was able to open a preparatory day school with the help of her sister Jemima, "and soon gained a number of Juvenile Pupils to educate along with my grandchildren".<sup>52</sup> In fact, 30 scholars soon flocked to their school, and James Bisset joined in, helping with hearing lessons and reading, and writing 'geographical tales' for the benefit of his grandchildren and their fellow scholars.<sup>53</sup> There must have been a growing demand for the education of girls because, after the death of her mother in 1825, Jemima was able to open her own Young Ladies Seminary in her father's small picture gallery.<sup>54</sup> Apart from their father's own tales, the Bissets daughters might well have used Maria Edgeworth's books, very popular until the end of the nineteenth century, or the educational tale *The History of Sandford and Merton* by Thomas Day, another Dissenter and member of the Lunar society. Like Edgeworth's works,

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Virtue, and Class were deeply interconnected.

<sup>51</sup> Money, J., 'Teaching in the market-place, importance of education in the economy of the English leisure towns', in Brewer, J. & Porter, R., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, London 1993, p.343.

<sup>52</sup> 'Reminiscences', 258. He also tells us that he sang some of his verses at his daughter's "Juvenile Seminary's Fête", and that the 30 pupils sang with him. He was an inveterate educator who loved a public. He added that he wrote verses for his own daughters which they recited at their schools in Birmingham.

<sup>53</sup> 'Reminiscences', 259.

<sup>54</sup> 'Reminiscences', 260. Fairfax's *New Guide and Directory to Leamington Spa*, 1833, lists Mrs Swanwick's (Christiana Bisset) Academy in its 'Professions' page.

it is a Rousseauist tale devoted to the development of practical knowledge, and very much directed at an audience of traders' and manufacturers' children.<sup>55</sup> As to the teaching of English, they might well have used Thomas Dyche's equally popular manual, *A Guide to the English Tongue*, which is an early method for the acquisition of the eighteenth century equivalent of 'received pronunciation', as it lays great emphasis on correct speech as opposed to "vicious pronunciation".<sup>56</sup> We have seen how the Caussemille children had to learn French and were expected to lose their Provençal accent; similarly, part of the English children's education which would distinguish them from the lower orders was the acquisition of a 'proper' accent, pronunciation, and grammar, whence Dyche's much re-edited and practical guide to this polite use of English.

James Bisset's Scottish Presbyterian background no doubt influenced his delight in reading. He tells us that, in his early years at his uncle's the Reverend, Bible reading was a must, especially on Sundays, and we know that he was an avid reader of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, from a very early age.<sup>57</sup> If his love of newspapers dates from the time when he was in far-away Scotland, undergoing a fairly strict education, it was because the *Gentleman's Magazine* must have opened a wider world to him, the world of what was fashionable, the world of taste as determined by the critics, all knowledge which would prove useful in his future life as a provider for the new demands of fashionable culture. Bisset boasted, apropos his Reading Rooms in Leamington, of having been "the first who took in a Newspaper for a Public Room", and as all mail came via Warwick with one penny extra charge and, he added with some bitterness, "as I regularly was supplied with from 30 to 36 Papers per week, the extra pence charged on each packet amounted to a considerable sum in

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<sup>55</sup> Schofield, *The Lunar...*, p.210.

<sup>56</sup> Dyche, Th., *A Guide to the English Tongue*, London, 1796 (first edition 1709), where he stated that pronunciation, spelling, and writing "with a Touch of the Modish Hand...are matters of such consequence to the Public." (British Library).

<sup>57</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1886.



the year".<sup>58</sup> An admission ticket to his "Picture Gallery, Newsroom, and Promenade", beautifully ornamented by Bisset, advertised "London and Provincial Newspapers, Daily Reviews (probably prepared by the whole family), and Period Publications". The terms of admission were on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly rates, in order to cater for absolutely all requirements.<sup>59</sup>

It is Bisset's Presbyterian upbringing in reading and his relationship with the Dissenting community in Birmingham, which must have inspired his participation, together with Joseph Priestley and other, mostly Unitarian, Birmingham worthies in the establishment of the first Birmingham Public Library.<sup>60</sup> We do not know much about what the Caussemilles read, but we do know that there were many books in the Bissets' household and that, because of Bisset's great love for Shakespeare and the theatre in general, they were well-read in dramatic literature. James Bisset boasted, for instance, that although they had little cash, all of their books and paintings were paid for, thanks to "[his] very good wife's management".<sup>61</sup> His own guide to Leamington and Warwick advertises two other reading rooms cum circulating libraries, Mr Olorenshaw's and Mr Perry's, as well as the Warwick book and music seller, Mr Heathcote. Bisset's poem, *Libraries*, sums up the goodies on offer in the town, some of them serious and 'rational':

...Both French and English well assorted,  
From Oxon's city late transported;  
In Science sure they must abound,  
Collected all on classic ground.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> 'Reminiscences', 258. This is what spurred him to start his long campaign for a Leamington Post-Office.

<sup>59</sup> 'Reminiscences', 253.

<sup>60</sup> 'Reminiscences', 252.

<sup>61</sup> 'Reminiscences', 259.

<sup>62</sup> Bisset, *A Descriptive Guide...*, first ed., 1814, p.22.

He and his family had plenty of opportunities, then, for reading the latest and most fashionable literature and, in so doing, to be part of this “exclusive civilizing process” brought about by a certain form of reading, mostly that defined by the critics.<sup>63</sup> Thanks to their daily contact with a multitude of newspapers, the Bissets must have been very up to date with the latest publications which took the lion’s share in the columns of advertisements, well ahead of real estate, medicines, and moveable goods as we have seen already.<sup>64</sup>

If education and reading was necessary for the Bissets in order to keep up with the leisure culture they provided for and belonged to, writing was also a necessity. Indeed, as in the case of the Caussemilles, the Bissets’ trade demanded writing. First as an artisan japanner or, in the description of Pye’s Birmingham Directory from 1785 to 1798, as a “miniature painter on glass, pearl and ivory”, Bisset had to write to clients and prospective clients and keep a ledger of accounts, although this was probably delegated to his wife Dorothy, the one who was good at figures. From 1800, Bisset appears in Birmingham Directories under a new entry: “Fancy miniature painter, Museum, New Street”. He had moved from the semi-utilitarian — he was, after all, painting buttons for Matthew Boulton’s ‘toy’ factory<sup>65</sup> — to pure fancy and leisure goods. In his own two directories, the *Magnificent Guide for the Town of Birmingham* of 1800, and the *Grand Copper Plate Directory* of 1808, his entry occupies five lines (instead of the one or two he gives to his fellow artisans,

<sup>63</sup> Donoghue, F., ‘Colonizing readers’, in Bermingham, A. & Brewer, J., *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800*, London, 1995, pp.54-74.

<sup>64</sup> Ferdinand, C. Y., ‘Selling it to the provinces, news and commerce round eighteenth-century Salisbury’, in Brewer & Porter, *Consumption...*, pp.393-411. We have seen in Chapter 3 how advertisements for books loom large in Mr Sharpe’s *Warwick Advertiser*.

<sup>65</sup> Bisset says of Matthew Boulton that he had “the gratification of doing a great deal of fancy painting for [him], with whom I had the happiness of being on a most intimate footing. The elegant paintings I did for him were on glass, about the size of a half-crown piece...”, *Memoir...*, p.76.

manufacturers, and tradesmen): “Jewelry, Toy, Fancy Miniature and Imperial Picture Warehouse, Repository for Alabaster, Spar, and Petrification Chimney Ornaments, original Marmotinto Drawings, Paintings in Oil and Watercolours, curious Transparencies, Pearl and Hair devices, Models in Wax, etc., etc.”, an amazing collection of pure fancy and semi-luxury goods which Matthew Boulton frowned on, as we shall see. Yet, as if this was not enough, he signed his 1808 directory as “J. Bisset, Author of the *Orphan Boy*, the *Converts* and the *Patriotic Clarion*, etc., etc.”. This spectacular evolution from manufacturing toys to manufacturing and providing for the leisure and novelty trade required an even greater use of the pen. Clients had to be actively sought, informed, and persuaded of the desirability of the goods on offer. This evolution was no doubt the result of manyfold circumstances, including a personal taste for the curious, the special, the odd, things such as the ‘curious Transparencies’ or the ‘Petrification Ornaments’. One very likely reason is the precariousness of a business dependent on the vagaries of the fashionable novelties. Bisset was not alone in having to abandon his trade as a japanner. He noted in his *Memoirs* that his companion apprentices at Mr Bellamy’s japanning factory had also to give up their trade; one ended as drawing master, one as a Baptist preacher, one as a pauper, one in a lottery office, and one died in the struggle for survival.<sup>66</sup> Matthew Boulton might well also have influenced the move to different novelties, for Bisset turned to him for assistance on 19 September 1804 when he was in financial difficulty: “My heart bleeds with anguish and tears almost dim my Eyes, when I inform you that I am in the utmost distress in consequence of the deadness of Trade, a heavy stock on hand...and at the present moment I am threatened with Prosecution for a Debt contracted with my Printer.”<sup>67</sup> To make this heart-rending supplication more effective he sent it via his youngest daughter Jemima, together with a few of his marmotinto drawings! His “experienced friend”, as he addressed Boulton, replied from Soho a month later to express his pain at Bisset’s distress and

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<sup>66</sup> *Memoir...*, p.72.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew Boulton Papers, 221/86.

enclosed a £20 note (Bisset had asked for £50), with the recommendation “to turn your attention to the useful arts rather than the ornamental” because, in the present times which were likely to grow worse rather than better, “the Time is near at hand when the Expenditure of most Persons will probably be confined to the Necessaries of Life”.<sup>68</sup>

The evolution of the Bissets’ business might appear to be in contradiction to Boulton’s advice, yet this is not entirely the case. The move to the leisure industry and the culture market was a withdrawal from the intense competition of capitalist enterprise, especially where the initial capital was small, a move from constantly non-paying clients and an escape from the care of non-paying apprentices to the more stable demands of the growing propertied leisure classes.<sup>69</sup> Did they knowingly, or intuitively, follow Mandeville’s view that it was the leisure activities more than manufactories which would bring prosperity and stability?<sup>70</sup>

Both husband and wife were involved in the ‘conversion’: Mrs B. ran the Museum while he made novelties or travelled around the country collecting curios and buying pictures, just as Madame Caussemille ran the business at home and on the market while her husband was doing the fairs and travelling to sell. The final conversion was the family’s move to Leamington in 1813, although Bisset himself had already gone ahead of the family a year before in order to start building their little empire there.<sup>71</sup> It was a cautious move: Bisset started his Picture Gallery and

<sup>68</sup> Matthew Boulton Papers, 221/88.

<sup>69</sup> In *Memoir...*, p.85, he said: “Trade had long continued flat and dead. I had tried several fancy professions, but although I had many good orders, I was generally unfortunat in receiving payment.” He also complained about those apprentices, of which he had several, — one of them in particular, a young gentleman of some means — who never paid the hundred guineas they owed their masters (p.78).

<sup>70</sup> Hundert, E.G., *The Enlightenment’s Fable, Bernard: Mandeville and the Discovery of Society*, Cambridge, 1994, Chapter 4, esp. pp.185-86.

Reading Room, while his wife stayed to look after their Museum and their affairs in Birmingham, and this separation must have given rise to an abundant correspondence between Leamington and Birmingham. It was a well timed move because, as Bisset remarked, “a spirit of speculation began to manifest itself at the Spa”, and, after their arrival in Leamington, “the place began to enlarge exceedingly, and the waters were held in high repute”.<sup>72</sup> They had to run their business on two sites: Mrs B. kept the Museum, which was in their house, while he ran the Gallery in Clemens Street, and he commented that “both answered extremely well”. One reason for their success was that he did not lose any time, and advertised the Bissets’ presence by writing *A Descriptive Guide to Leamington Priors* which came out in 1814. For his Birmingham Directory he had written to local traders, manufacturers, artisans, and bankers to sell them an entry; in his Leamington guide he does advertise a few Birmingham manufacturers, but his main correspondents and clients are the very few local traders, booksellers, local hotels and landladies, and the owners of the Theatre and The Grand Assembly Rooms. Like Caussemille, being his own salesman he had to write and travel far and wide to sell his goods and scout for new clients. He wrote and sent complimentary copies of his works to grandees like the Earl of Aylesford and, in the case of his Birmingham directory, even to the King himself, in order to advertise himself and in the hope that they would praise or recommend his products: poems, tales, medallions, and guides. He was sometimes successful and managed, for instance, to establish himself as medallist to their majesties, after having tried his hand at medallions of Nelson, Fox, and even Pitt, in spite of an earlier satire of him in a ballad he had written in the more radical 1790s.<sup>73</sup> He found that the medal trade

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<sup>71</sup> Bisset explains himself in his *Descriptive Guide* (p.30) that “in consequence of a casual visit to Leamington, and hearing heavy complaints from the Visitors, “of a great dearth of Public Amusements”, we were induced *for their accomodation* to establish a PICTURE GALLERY, and Public READING ROOM early in 1812.”

<sup>72</sup> *Memoir...*, p.86.

<sup>73</sup> WCRO, CR 223/2. This ballad, ‘Why call’d a Jacobin?’ in which he concludes “But, perhaps, ‘tis because I dislike Mr Pitt”, is pasted in the ‘Commonplace Book’ of the Smith family of millers

“answered exceedingly well”.<sup>74</sup> Bisset, ever adaptable, had hit on the prevailing mood of patriotism of the war years against Napoleon.

Before branching out into medal making, Bisset had joined another new trade, well described by John Brewer,<sup>75</sup> that of the marketing of other people’s art, when artist and dealer become separated. He was an art dealer on a fairly grand scale, “I visited London again and bought many pictures for my new Paragon Gallery”, or “I sold many fine paintings”.<sup>76</sup> He had an eye for good paintings of which he had “a considerable number”, according to the Reverend Field’s description of Bisset’s collection in his Gallery in Leamington; these included a James Barry and a Tintoretto (which could well have been copies of course).<sup>77</sup> The Bissets participated in, and contributed to, another aspect of eighteenth-century culture, that of the taste for natural history, combined with one for the bizarre in nature, for the uncanny, the ‘monstrous’, the weird.<sup>78</sup> His Museum contained a potted compendium of the mixed taste of the time for natural science together with the ‘unnatural’ wonders of nature, the ‘phenomena’ which are listed with many exclamation marks in Bisset’s Catalogue of Curiosities: “a Milk-White Hare from Siberia!”, or “A most curious

in Gloucestershire who were radical Methodists, or so it seems from the newspaper cuttings and handbills they collected.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Reminiscences’, 252; *Memoir...*, p.85.

<sup>75</sup> Brewer, J., ‘The most polite age and the most vicious’, Birmingham, A., Brewer, J., *The Consumption of culture 1600-1800*, London, 1995, pp.341-361.

<sup>76</sup> *Memoir...*, pp.93 & 94.

<sup>77</sup> Field, W., *A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town and Castle of Warwick*, Warwick, 1815, p.327. Also, Bisset describes transactions he had over a Reubens, and two Canaletti (sic): the latter he sold for £100 to the Earl of Dudley and Wade, *Memoir...*, p.84 & ‘Reminiscences’, 258.

<sup>78</sup> Castle, T., *The Female Thermometer*, Oxford, 1995, especially the Introduction and Chapter 1, and Todd, D., *Imagining Monsters: Miscreation of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England*, Chicago, 1995. Of course there could be scepticism also, as the sarcastic article on Joanna Southcote testifies in the *Warwick Advertiser* of 3 September 1814.

SPIRAL HORN of the UNICORN, eight feet long", next to "the Portrait, at full length, of Count Bornwlaski, the celebrated Polish Dwarf, in height only 3 feet 3 inches, at the age of 66; drawn from life".<sup>79</sup>

During the Bissets' time in Birmingham, there was a lively pub in Bell Street, the Leicester Arms, run by John Freeth, a poet and song writer. John Money described Bisset as "Freeth's closest associate, and in many ways his successor as local poet and ballad writer".<sup>80</sup> And indeed, James Bisset took his role to heart. He wrote with speed and ease, and in an impromptu manner. His craft was that of the popular oral tradition, rather than that of the written and literary. "I never sit and study but write all off hand" he commented and he added: "I have composed more than three hundred songs and written upwards to 50 different tales."<sup>81</sup> This does not appear to tally with his claim that he wrote about ten to twelve songs every month and continued to write up to the day he died, but we have seen that he was not strong on figures. When he attended public dinners in Warwick and Leamington, he tells us that he always made it a point to compose a song.<sup>82</sup> Many were probably never printed or printed on handbills now lost. However, by 1801, eight volumes of his poems and ballads were printed and published in Birmingham,<sup>83</sup> and his 'poetical effusions' were widely distributed in pubs, by chapmen, or in bookshops. For instance, ten thousand copies of a patriotic ballad, *Britannica Triumphant*, was distributed to the armies during the French Wars and Bisset added to his claims that, all in all, "one hundred thousand copies of his works were issued from the press".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Bisset, *A Descriptive....*, pp.88-89.

<sup>80</sup> Money, J., *Experience and Identity. Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1800*, Manchester, 1977, p.116.

<sup>81</sup> 'Reminiscences', 258.

<sup>82</sup> ditto.

<sup>83</sup> According to the *Birmingham Daily Post*'s Notes and Queries in the late 1860s (nd, a cutting in Leamington Library).

He was a member of “many Anacreontic societies”, he claims.<sup>85</sup>, which tells us about his style: “convivial and amatory in tone” according to the *Oxford Dictionary*. *The Auctioneer*, a farmers’ paper, confirms that at a Ram Show dinner, “the greatest harmony prevailed, which was not a little increased by the convivial powers of Mr James Bisset of Leamington, who composed and sang”.<sup>86</sup> And indeed, Bisset is modest about his prolific writing:

I never pretended to be a great poet,  
I write not for bread, and care little for pelf,  
But scribble, to please my good Friends and myself...  
Engagements in bus’ness, fill most of my time,  
And little, indeed, can I trifle with rhyme.<sup>87</sup>

However he *was* writing for bread though, as we have seen, the *Magnificent Guide* was a splendid advertisement for himself and its first copy went to Matthew Boulton. As it turned out, he had been too ambitious: he actually lost money, not only on the Guide itself but on the *Grand Copper Plate Directory* with its exquisite but costly engravings.<sup>88</sup> Bisset enclosed a prospectus with his covering letter to Boulton; it assured the reader that his Guide will combine “both elegance and usefulness”, and that the names of the trades in it will be disseminated “not only over the whole Kingdom, but will, in Time, find their Way to the first Cities in the Universe”, and he signed himself as “the Public Obedient Servant” such was the measure of his ambition at the time (1800).<sup>89</sup> In spite of his financial losses, he did not give up, but started work on a *Grand National Directory or Universal Register*

<sup>84</sup> Bisset, J., *Momentary Miscellaneous Effusions*, Leamington, 1823.

<sup>85</sup> *Memoir...*, p.79.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Reminiscences’, 258.

<sup>87</sup> In his ‘Address to the Reader’, *Magnificent Guide...*

<sup>88</sup> Walker, B., ‘Birmingham directories’, *Transactions of the Birmingham Archeological Society*, 58, (1934), pp.1-36.

<sup>89</sup> Matthew Boulton Papers, 221/83.



which was never completed; then, in 1808, he published another *Magnificent Guide or Grand Copperplate Directory*, with even more plates than in the first one.<sup>90</sup> By the time the Bissets moved to Leamington, James definitely had to write for bread, yet again he had to advertise the family enterprise. His *Descriptive Guide to Leamington Priors* of 1814, with a second edition in 1816, was a much more modest volume destined to sell as essential commodity to the strangers to the town, and the Bissets' contribution to their entertainment was well advertised in it. These Guides must have been a source of income: for instance, the Reverend William Field, who published his guide to Warwick at the same time, certainly did not consider himself "the Public obedient Servant"; his aim was to supplement his modest income from his Unitarian parishioners, in order to raise his 14 children.

What these Guides have in common — William Hutton's much re-edited *History of Birmingham*, Field's, and Bisset's — is their personal, conversational or epistolary styles, very different from the flights of rhetoric of the French *Préfets' Statistiques*. Directories and Guides were no longer just utilitarian, or just written for an antiquarian interest. The prospectus of the *Universal British Directory* of 1793-98 states that it addresses itself to "persons or families unconnected with business whose pursuit is pleasure in travelling or amusement... [They] will find an agreeable companion and an ample guide in this directory".<sup>91</sup> Similarly, in his *Descriptive Guide to Leamington Priors*, Bisset offered "amusement and correct information"; his guides were as much shaped by the new culture as they were shaping it, and were creating a demand and encouraging consumption. His *Magnificent Guide to the Town of Birmingham* is a paean to the world of machines, manufactures, toys, novelties, and semi-luxury goods; Maxine Berg has described it strikingly as a sort of 'Grand Tour'.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Walker, 'Birmingham...'.  


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<sup>91</sup> *The Universal British Directory*, 3 vols., London 1793-98, facsimile edition, King's Lynn, 1993.

This 'tour' of the new world of manufactures and of their beauty contributed, before Dickens, to putting the industrial urban landscape and its inhabitants on the literary map, and to the beginning of the displacement of the country house as the main text of literary productions. We have seen how a guide to the Warwickshire area is part of the accoutrement of Miss Prickett's steamy romance which even mentions, and recommends, Bisset's Guide: a nice instance of transtextuality.<sup>93</sup> It could be Bisset's guide also which inspired a chapter of Charles Dickens' *Dombey and Son*,<sup>94</sup> where proud Dombey and proud Edith make their fated encounters in Leamington, on the promenade and at the Pump Rooms. The ever adaptable Bisset, now in his new balneological territory, adapted his writing to the culture he had to cater for, a culture new for the Midlands, even if it had been about for half a century in the South. He was not writing for the rich and industrious, nor even just for the rich, about the delights and beauties of industry, but for the rich and leisurely about the delights of leisure pastimes: his 'Ladies and Gentlemen's Reading and News Room', for instance, was "fitted up...for the reception of Company of the first rank".<sup>95</sup> In his judgement, he succeeded in this enterprise: "The place only wanted to be known and I had the felicity of having my book much read, and most

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<sup>92</sup> Berg, 'Inventors of the world of Goods'..., p.37.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>94</sup> Dickens, Ch., *Dombey and Son*, Chapter 21, London, 1848. Harmondsworth 1970 edition. Raymond Williams in his Introduction to the novel emphasises how Dickens' novels draw their inspiration from the popular tradition of "the theatre, the newspapers, the public platform and the pulpit, and the stories and songs of the taverns", but he adds that "It is not the old folk tradition of a pre-industrial society; it is that tradition altered, extended, sharpened by the experience of industrial life and of cities...that by an extraordinary effort of creative development he made it available to literature." Only the last statement does not apply to Bisset! Raymond Williams developed this theme in his chapter on Dickens, in *The Country and the City*, (London, 1973), St Albans, 1975. pp.189-201.

<sup>95</sup> Bisset, *A Descriptive Guide*, p.30.

extensively circulated."<sup>96</sup> The Napoleonic *Statistiques*, although quite thorough, were not necessarily reliable, but Bisset's guide, while warning in its 'Apology to the Reader' that "for writing statistics I was never intended", claimed to give "correct information".<sup>97</sup> It was catering for the visitors to the Spa, whose arrival was listed weekly in the *Warwick Advertiser*. The guide, therefore, was of small format and very readable, so that it could be carried around easily; it was no longer a grand affair to be displayed on one's shelf, but only "an entertaining Pocket Companion".<sup>98</sup> The average stay at the Spa was four to six weeks, at least for those who came for the waters rather than just for entertainment.<sup>99</sup> This was good for the Bissets' business: the stay was long enough to allow the weekly, or monthly subscriber to enjoy their Museum, Reading Room, and Picture Gallery, and for temporary pupils to attend their daughters' schools. Was it through explicit or tacit arrangement that William Field's guide to Warwick and Leamington catered for the more scientifically inclined visitor who wanted a professional view on the waters and the more antiquarian inclined who wanted the full history of Warwick Castle and the rise of Leamington, while Bisset's guide gave more utilitarian details, including a description of 'Modern Warwick'? The Bissets' cultural empire was described in Field's guide, but of course didn't loom as large as in Bisset's own Guide.<sup>100</sup> By means of their Guide then, and of the cultural goods they offered, the Bissets were placing themselves right in the middle of the town's public life:

We have a General Assembly and General Ball,

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<sup>96</sup> *Memoir...*, p.87.

<sup>97</sup> Bisset, *A Descriptive Guide...*, p.84.

<sup>98</sup> Bisset in his 'Address to the Reader', *A Descriptive Guide...*, 1814.

<sup>99</sup> Baxter, E.G., 'The social life of visitors to Leamington Spa in the first half of the nineteenth century', *Warwickshire History*, 1&2 (1975), pp.15-36 and 46-70.

<sup>100</sup> In fact our *literati* advertised for each other: Bisset, in his turn, described W. Field's *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town and Castle of Warwick* at the end of his own *Guide*, and, as a bonus, advertised Field's *Young Gentlemen's Academy*, indeed the only school mentioned in his *Guide*.

Grand galleries open for one or for all;  
 We have inns and hotels too, the like never seen,  
 Since General Rendezvous dwelt here I ween;  
 A theatre, billiards, and Ranelagh rare,  
 Libraries and Pump Rooms beyond all compare...  
 The shops are quite splendid, and General Dash-on  
 To parade is oft seen with fam'd General Fashion  
 Who constantly in our neighbourhood dwells,  
 And promenades daily round sanative wells.<sup>101</sup>

What is interesting about the Bissets is that they were indeed in the *middle*, in a cultural, economic and political middle, but not rigidly so. Their mobility is their remarkable characteristic and they move up and down the cultural thermometer. Just as Bisset's Guide "challenged these hierarchies" between artists and manufacturers, or arts and crafts,<sup>102</sup> their tastes, culture, business, and social network placed them at the seam between 'high' and 'low' Enlightenment culture, and between them and a more traditional urban culture.

The Bissets' contribution to 'high' culture was their picture gallery, their portfolio of prints, and their medallions, which were patronised, commissioned, and purchased by the lords and ladies of the gentry who were listed in Bisset's writings.<sup>103</sup> A letter in *The Gentleman's Magazine* described the Bissets' contribution as belonging to "the higher orders of amusements".<sup>104</sup> Their Leamington News and Reading Room, although "fitted up for the reception of company of the first rank", was less exclusive, more open to the 'Public', a less class-defined cross section of visitors, though still aimed at providing them with 'Rational Amusements'.<sup>105</sup> The considerable place the theatre occupied in James

<sup>101</sup> *Memoir...*, p.56, from *The XXX [sic] Generals*.

<sup>102</sup> Berg, 'Inventors of the world of goods' ..., p.33.

<sup>103</sup> See 'Reminiscences', 258, for instance, or *Memoir*, p.89.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted by Bisset in the 'Introduction' to both his guides.

Bisset's life was probably good evidence of his position in the halfway house of culture. In Birmingham, the New Street Theatre, next door to their house, was almost part of their domain; he founded the Amateur Theatre Club where they performed Shakespeare's and other plays, including one of his own, and he also wrote many addresses and prologues to the plays which he would often deliver himself.<sup>106</sup> By the time his family moved to Leamington, Bisset was "well acquainted with almost all the Provincial Actors ... and Theatre Managers",<sup>107</sup> and his involvement with the local theatre continued in this town where his play, *The Whims of the Castle*, was performed many times. The Bissets' Museum, Mrs B.'s domain, could be described as representing the 'lower' end of the 'Enlightenment culture'. Is this why, we may wonder, the responsibility of running it was left to Mrs B., while her husband dealt with the informed connoisseurs of the art market? William Field, in his guide, described the Museum's contents: "It contains a considerable variety of specimens of birds, beasts, fishes, and insects, British and Foreign; and a great number of curious articles of the arms, the dress, the ornaments, and the musical instruments of ancient times, and of foreign, and particularly barbarous countries. — Certainly, an hour of leisure, at Leamington, can scarcely find more rational and pleasing gratification, than that, which the inspection of this small but amusing collection of the wonders of nature and art will afford."<sup>108</sup> As a good Unitarian with a reverence for science, Field described as 'rational' the pleasure these 'barbarous' and 'Foreign' wonders offered; but Bisset, who loved beautiful paintings and Shakespeare's plays, was not ashamed of his delight at simple jokes and riddles, and at his wonder at dwarfs and giants, or "the largest man ever known in England",<sup>109</sup> all subjects by then considered as part of 'low' culture, but typical of

<sup>105</sup> Bisset, *A Descriptive Guide*..., p.30.

<sup>106</sup> *Memoir*..., p.28 & 32.

<sup>107</sup> 'Reminiscences', 259.

<sup>108</sup> Field, *A Historical*...p.333.

<sup>109</sup> *Memoir*..., p.81.

the century's interest for the weird and the monstrous.<sup>110</sup> He enjoyed displaying his pet flea and his live snake, or watching the lion fights at Warwick, "a sport which didn't appear shocking at all".<sup>111</sup> Of the 21 guides to Leamington and Warwick published between the years 1813 and 1832, Bisset's is not only the most 'modern' in presentation, but the only one to mention the Wednesday market in the town where, as well as in other public places, weird and wondrous sights were offered: juggling, legerdemain, 'scientific performances', Punch and Judy, 'Savoyards and Pandean performers', wild beasts, itinerant equestrians, 'Morrisco' or Morris dancers, etc.

Bisset's guides prompted a later local historian to remark that "In the absence of a press and advertising committee to the 'boom' town he [Bisset] made himself a self-appointed journalist, keeping Leamington well before the eyes of the fashionable world in search of health and happiness".<sup>112</sup> Apart from his guides, Bisset's other writings were mostly for the plebs: his Sunday School 'effusions' (whose ornamentations were much too elegant to place them on a viable financial par with Hannah More's) and his topical songs and ballads were destined for an audience of artisans, his first companions, of farmers in the Warwick taverns, and of the unpretentious middling sort. They were in the traditions of the conviviality and oral culture of the tavern and the coffee-house. As well as going to play billiards with the Earl, Bisset went to Warwick, the county town, for his traditional 'low culture', as an *habitué* of many pubs and their friendly circles.<sup>113</sup> By contrast, Leamington was the territory of the new 'low Enlightenment culture' which had grown at Warwick's doors. For the 'high' culture of private collections, art exhibitions and *conversazioni*.

<sup>110</sup> See Park, K., & Daston, L., 'Unnatural conception, the study of monsters in sixteenth and seventeenth-century France and England', *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), pp.47-73.

<sup>111</sup> 'Reminiscences', 253, 258, & 260.

<sup>112</sup> Mellows, *The history...*, p.13.

<sup>113</sup> 'Reminiscences', 250 & 258 for e.g.

the Bissets went to London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, or to country houses.<sup>114</sup> Yet, all in all, the Bissets fit the Roy Porter's description of the "lower level of Enlightenment culture — that of the prudential, self-help, self-interest, of the small master class. The latter, unlike elite Enlightenment, was more interested in music, fellowship, theatre, bookclubs, the tavern and debating society politics".<sup>115</sup>

Porter's description is that of Habermas's eighteenth-century bourgeois in the public sphere, but it has to be refined for our period, which was marked by the upheavals of the French Revolution and the Wars with France. First, then, let us look at James Bisset as an eighteenth-century man of the public sphere. He was an active participant in debating societies like his Society for Free Debate in Freeth's coffee-house, of which he was the secretary for many years.<sup>116</sup> He was a member of book clubs, libraries, and friendly societies, like the one which met at the Woolpack in Warwick. This life of his in the public sphere of Birmingham has been well described by Davidoff and Hall, by Money, and by Bisset himself;<sup>117</sup> so does this network of relationships earn him a place among the notables of the town? He was probably not considered as one by the local gentry, as his remarkable absence from the diaries of Bertie Greatheed of Guy's Cliffe Hall, might testify; yet they shared common friends and acquaintances, they both had a taste for paintings and a sizeable collection of them, and they both had a considerable involvement and interest in the development of the Spa.<sup>118</sup> Unlike the Caussemilles, the Bissets did not fulfil the

<sup>114</sup> 'Reminiscences', 258, and *Memoir...*, p.90.

<sup>115</sup> Porter, R., 'Science, provincial culture and public opinion in Enlightenment England' in Borsay, *The Eighteenth-Century* ..., pp.243-267.

<sup>116</sup> *Memoir...*, p.79.

<sup>117</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family...*, pp.417-419; Money, *Experience...*, pp.116,136,137, where he also describes Freeth's Coffee House as the locus of Birmingham political consciousness (p.103); *Memoir...*, pp.76 & 84, and 'Reminiscences', 250 & 259.

<sup>118</sup> It was Greatheed's grand-daughter who laid the first stone of the Regent Hotel. Chaplin, R., 'The rise of Royal Leamington Spa', *Warwickshire History*, 2 (1972-1973), pp.13-29; it was Bisset who

requirements, characteristic of the notables, of stability and rootedness in one place, and they didn't have wealth or political power, even less than the Caussemilles; but their entrepreneurial activity in the culture of their time gave them a distinctive place amongst the town worthies, if not the town notables. Their business was indeed too new to have classified status on the notable hierarchy scale. It was, somehow, at the seam between the trades and the professions. Again, like the Caussemilles, their education and ease with the pen endowed them with the power also to act as mediators for the less privileged to whom they gave a voice. For instance, Bisset campaigned for a better Postal Service for Leamington, and organised the raising of funds for the Birmingham Soup Kitchen, Charity Schools, and Hospital.<sup>119</sup> Finally, his writings had put Birmingham, Warwick, and Leamington, on the map of the culture of consumption although, rather like the Caussemilles, the Bissets were not themselves conspicuous consumers. Unlike Jean-Pierre Caussemille and his elder son, James Bisset did not even have a gold watch: "I was never a follower of the Fashions, I wore one steel watch chain for 32 years, never sported a gold one."<sup>120</sup> Bisset was, nonetheless, an active participant of the Mandevillian 'commercial sociability', because he was inventing goods to create a demand for them, thus following Mandeville's argument that "the sociableness of man" arises from the "the multiplicity of his Desires".<sup>121</sup>

If the bourgeois public life, especially in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was changing from an associative to a more organised, more formal type of encounter,<sup>122</sup> there was still plenty of the old associative life about, as we have seen

laid the first stone of the Pump Rooms and that of the new wing of the parish church, *Memoir...*, pp.87-88.

<sup>119</sup> *Memoir...*, p.32; 'Reminiscences', 250.

<sup>120</sup> 'Reminiscences', 258.

<sup>121</sup> Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable...*, esp. Chapter 4, 'A world of goods', p.199.

<sup>122</sup> Morris, R.J., 'Voluntary societies and Birmingham elites 1780-1850' in Borsay, P., *The Eighteenth-Century Town 1688-1820*, London, 1990, esp. p.346-56; Davidoff & Hall, *Family...*



earlier. Bisset did belong to the Masons, and it is through the Masons that he considerably enlarged his social network in the Midlands. Indeed, he said that “as Provincial Grand Steward in Birmingham St Alban’s Masonic Lodge, I had the felicity...of conducting the various processions made in Birmingham, whenever they went in a body, joined by members of St Paul’s Lodge, either to church or to lay the foundation of any public buildings”.<sup>123</sup> It was through the Masons that he probably had his first contact with Warwick, and with Lord Brooke, at Warwick Castle. Bisset was one of the original founders of Guy’s Lodge, the first masonic lodge for Warwick and Leamington,<sup>124</sup> and that really put him in the ranks of the urban worthies, together with another Leamington Brother and worthy Dr Jephson. Yet, like Caussemille, Bisset proclaimed that he abstained from politics: “I abstain from entering on Political matters”, but added in the same breath “tho’ a Staunch friend to Reform”.<sup>125</sup> In fact, he spoke the language of the ‘middle class’ which followed identical ups and downs to those described by Dror Wahrman.<sup>126</sup> In the 1790s, he was a radical who admired and had met Joseph Priestley;<sup>127</sup> it was Bisset, after all, who was acting as vice-chairman at the dinner celebrating the anniversary of the French Revolution, which precipitated the Birmingham riots and the crushing of radicalism in Birmingham.<sup>128</sup> The *Birmingham Gazette*’s announcement for the dinner was couched in typical radical Dissenters’ style: its purpose was “to commemorate the auspicious day which witnessed the Emancipation of...a truly great and enlightened Nation, with whom it is our interest, as a commercial People, and our Duty as Friends to the General Rights of Mankind, to promote a free intercourse,

p.419.

<sup>123</sup> *Memoir...*, p.34.

<sup>124</sup> Walker, ‘Birmingham Directories...’.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Reminiscences’, p.260.

<sup>126</sup> Wahrman, D., *Imagining the Middle Class The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840*, Cambridge, 1995, esp. Chapter 2.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Reminiscences’, 259.

<sup>128</sup> *Memoir...*, p.76.

as subservient to permanent Friendship".<sup>129</sup> As was his wont, Bisset had composed and sung a rousing song for the occasion and, as a consequence, while he and his household escaped unscathed, he lost some of his King and Country patrons. So much for someone who was avowedly apolitical! Compared with the Caussemilles who gained from the Revolution, by being able to enlarge their business, the Bissets lost business because of it. As a consequence, James Bisset's language certainly became more prudent and conservative and, as for many others, the Napoleonic wars gave his voice a patriotic and loyalist turn. For a period, many of his ballads become virulently anti-Napoleon, and pro-King and Country: his 'Patriotic Clarion', 'The Loyal Lads of Birmingham', the 'Loyalist Alphabet', and hundreds more.<sup>130</sup> Wahrman says that the language of the 'middle class' became 'subdued', more 'quiescent',<sup>131</sup> and Bisset's production reflected this mood, a mood of politeness rather than politics. The impact of the Wars was to make political and social ideas seen and denounced as dangerous.<sup>132</sup> William Hutton printer and bookseller in Birmingham, a Dissenter and a Commissioner in the Court of Requests, had his property destroyed and was still being harassed years after the riots. As he said, "Every political mob has its owners", and in the case of the Birmingham Riots the owners were its "principal inhabitants";<sup>133</sup> as a result he withdrew from all public business. In Warwick, the radical 'waggon' was also silent, much to the despair of a

<sup>129</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, July 11, 1781, quoted by Langford, J.A., *A Century of Birmingham Life 1741-1841*, vol.1, Birmingham 1868.

<sup>130</sup> Commonplace Book, 49 & 26,27, 99, 100. For the arrival of the Birmingham volunteers at Warwick on 22nd May 1804: "We'll fix Little Boney, But death e'er shall free him from Warwick Jail, In Warwick Jail Little Boney will hail, On his Throne - through the grating of Warwick Jail'. While apparently patriotic, was Bisset being ironical about the volunteers?

<sup>131</sup> Wahrman, *Imagining...*, p.158-159.

<sup>132</sup> Briggs, A., *Age of Improvement 1783-1867*, New York, 1959, pp.172 & 176.

<sup>133</sup> Hutton, W., *The Life of William Hutton F.A. S.S., Including a Particular Account of the Riots at Birmingham in 1791*, London, 1816, p.171.

friend of its erstwhile Reformist inhabitants, a William Ruding who wrote to Bertie Greatheed, once active in politics in the 1790s: “ Bertie Greatheed, John Henry Williams, John Parkes, where are you all, and what are you doing? You once made some noise in the world... what says your inactivity when the question of Reform is agitating in so many different places? Where then is the public spirit, the oratory once so eminently displayed from the Waggon of Warwickshire?” To this Greatheed replies: “I am ready to admit that the scenes that have been acted at home and abroad...have produced in me perhaps a culpable disgust to do interference in public life...in this county there is a perfect indifference on the subject of Parliamentary Reform.”<sup>134</sup>

Because of this “disgust to do interference in public life”, it is a time when the middling classes created some kind of identity for themselves, having put their ‘middle class’ political identity through language in abeyance, by way of a common culture which excluded controversy, either religious or political.<sup>135</sup> This culture was all the more strong and enticing since its members were brought into it because of the death of politics. It is then that came to be the ‘cultural willingness’ described by Bourdieu, which helped to distinguish and separate a cultural and, eventually again, a political elite.<sup>136</sup> Although Bisset did write a poem on Sir Francis Burdett’s committal to the Tower of London in 1810, calling it a “vile incarceration”,<sup>137</sup> it was only ten years later that he returned to the language of political controversy in his ballads on the Reform Bill and Irish Emancipation, and when he added his voice in 1820, to the chorus of popular support for Queen Caroline. It was only in 1818, in his *Memoir*, that Bisset dared write about his participation in the fated banquet

<sup>134</sup> WCRO, 1707/120, Bertie Greatheed, Journals, May 1813 and June 1813.

<sup>135</sup> Wach, H.M., ‘Civil society, moral identity and the liberal public sphere: Manchester and Boston, 1810-1840’, *Social History*, 21 (1996), pp.281-303.

<sup>136</sup> Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.C., *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London, 1994 (transl., first pub. 1977).

<sup>137</sup> Commonplace Book, 132.

celebrating the French Revolution; he had underplayed this part of his life because he had to for his family's survival. During the interim of 1800 to 1820, after a short patriotic outburst, his poems and ballads revolved mostly around small local events, and, when in Leamington, about his adoptive town and its wondrous rise. He summed up beautifully the changes of mood of the time in his ballad about the graffiti on Birmingham walls during the years 1791 to 1800, "Humbugging Scribblings" he called them:

1791: Church and King,  
 The words seemed a passport for each Man and Boy  
 To ransack and plunder, to burn and Destroy.  
 1793: War and Pitt,  
 Old England for Ever  
 Down down with the French  
 Damn Dissenters  
 Damn Bonuparte and the Pope  
 But National matters to local gave place  
 and Buckles No Shoestrings the walls then did grace.  
 Then the gilt button: Bore Gilt, no Semilore  
 Now instead of No Foxites, No Priestley  
 No Paine they write: No Portland  
 No Wars, Damn Pitt, No King Lords of Commons, Large Loaves  
 No taxes No Tythes but a Free Constitution.<sup>138</sup>

The Bissets are a striking example of the transitional stage in the making of the 'middle class'; they could be described as an epitome of the long eighteenth-century urban culture who have made good, thanks to their adaptability, their inventiveness, and their education, which gave them the resources, in default of wealth, to acquire a place of distinction in their town. Indeed they contributed to the creation of a cultural

<sup>138</sup> Commonplace Book, 49.

consensus which linked the middle class together, but their membership of a wider social network which straddled what we might very roughly simplify as the three spheres of culture, the 'high', the 'middling' and the 'low', placed them in the ranks of notoriety rather than notability. Because they were less self-sufficient, as a nuclear family, than the Caussemilles, they had to reach out more to establish their network of sociability. However both families had a wide territory, by dint of their business: the whole of the Midlands and more for the Bissets, and the whole of Provence and more for the Caussemilles. Within that territory, both families showed an adaptability which was made possible by their education. They were both 'jacks of all trades', to use the descriptive label applied to Bisset by the *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*.<sup>139</sup> It is this openness and mobility in their life's transactions, together with their education, which gave both families authority and distinction. In the case of the Caussemilles, it was a durable distinction, perpetrated and enlarged throughout the century because of their extended family structure and culture, and their rootedness in one place; with the Bissets' restricted nuclear setup, it died with the second generation, leaving behind only notoriety. Both families belonged to the small capitalist class, but with a cultural capital which privileged them in the society of their time, where their involvement in the consumption of culture gave them social identity.

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<sup>139</sup> *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, 'Notes and Queries', 13 July 1904, Leamington Spa Library.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion: linguistic distinction as identity or distinction *sans frontières*

This chapter will emphasize again the factors which led to the development of a distinctive though somewhat protean culture in our period, where here ‘culture’ is used with Edward Thompson’s caveat, not as a “cosy invocation of consensus”,<sup>1</sup> but rather as a spectrum with breaks whose boundaries are unclear. First we described the ‘urban factor’, or the appropriation of culture by the town, by-passing the country-house network; then the new and more extensive educational practices; the print market of writers and readers; religion and its counterpart, secularisation achieved through the greater emphasis on the written word and its good usage and interpretation. Finally, it is essential to recognise and add to these factors, women’s new prominence in this institution of the written word, and their role in the dissemination of a *culture sans frontières*. Indeed, the international aspect of this new culture which gave its beneficiaries an identity and a distinction above nationality and, to a certain extent, above class, although it can best be described as coinciding with ‘middle class’ values, is one of the most striking aspects of the power of print in our period.

Towns were the main manufacturers of the written word, so much so that, in France, the work done by printers called *ouvrages de villes*, ‘town jobs’, represented the main activity of provincial printers in both countries.<sup>2</sup> Amanda Vickery has convincingly emphasised that ‘urban culture’ does not mean “an oppositional culture of commerce versus land”,<sup>3</sup> especially in provincial market

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, E.P., *Customs in Common*, London, 1991, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, H., Chartier, R., eds., *Histoire de l’édition française*, 3 vols, vol. 2, *Le livre triomphant*, Paris, 1984, p.282.

towns like Warwick and Draguignan. Jean-Pierre Caussemille, trader-manufacturer in Draguignan, had land and property in the country, and so must have had the members of the *cercle* who met in his house. James Bisset, local entrepreneur of urban culture, produced goods for the landed gentry and sang songs with farmers in the Warwick pubs. Bertie Greateed in Warwick, although a member of the Warwickshire landed gentry, was a consumer of town culture and sociability, and met the Whigs and Independent minded people in the same pub as did James Bisset.<sup>4</sup> Their distinction as recognised *porte-parole*, persons of consequence was, however, given by the norms and culture of the town where they lived.

Phoebe Parkes' 'Scrapbook' bears witness to this culture.<sup>5</sup> She came from a well-established Unitarian family in the town, and was the daughter of one of its biggest manufacturer. We are told that her parents were prolific letter-writers,<sup>6</sup> and Phoebe might well have been educated at home, Unitarian fashion, or at the school of the family friends, the Misses Byerleys, in the High Street (see Chapter 2). Her scrapbook contains views of Warwick and Leamington engraved by local artists, like James Bisset and William Rider; newspaper cuttings from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Literary Gazette*, and the *New Monthly Magazine*, as well as one from what might be the *Birmingham Aris Gazette* relating the great celebrations in the town for the official opening of the Warwick and Birmingham and the Warwick and Napton canals in December 1799 "with firing of cannon and ringing of bells"; articles on Non-Conformist worthies, especially Joseph Priestley; an article from the *Birmingham Post* on the discovery of oxygen by Priestley; articles on Samuel Parr,

<sup>3</sup> Vickery, A., 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), pp.383-414.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 5 and WCRO, CR 1707/122. Bertie Greateed Diaries, 10 June 1818.

<sup>5</sup> WCRO, A Par, Phoebe Parkes' Scrapbook, 1824.

<sup>6</sup> WCRO, Bertie Greateed's Journals, e.g. for 27 October 1805, and William Field's *Memoirs of the Reverend Samuel Parr*, London, 1828, 2 vols. 1, pp.217-218.

the radical Anglican scholar and friend of the family. as well as a verbal portrait of him in Phoebe's hand. It has a letter from him to her, which indicates that he provided her with books and had an interest in her education; it has some lines on Sarah Siddons, the London actress who had been resident in Warwick, as well as a poem by Garrick complaining about the poor hospitality he was given at the Castle;<sup>7</sup> and it has a cutting recounting the visit of Charles Fox to the Warwick monthly meeting of the Whig club at the Crown and Anchor on 12 May 1800, when Fox toasted Dr Parr with: "The natural alliance between freedom and learning be ever cemented." (Phoebe Parkes seals this alliance by another formula with which she identifies Parr, when she calls him "a friend of Fox and Romilly"). Finally, there is an anecdote which Phoebe probably cribbed from William Field's *Memoirs of Samuel Parr*, which relates how Parr sarcastically put down a zealous Church of England man who was querying Parr's flirtation with the Dissenters. Such a compendium of urban culture is a convincing illustration of a distinctive provincial culture, focused on the local community as affected by wider issues; it is this culture of the 'middle class' which Dhror Wahrman opposes to another form, that which he describes as a national, London centred, aristocratic culture.<sup>8</sup>

This opposition is further complicated by the peculiarity of some English towns like Warwick, or Bradford as described by Smail,<sup>9</sup> which qualifies Vickery's denial of an opposition of town versus country: the struggle of the landed Anglican Tory culture and their followers versus the manufacturing Dissenter Whigs. Kate

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<sup>7</sup> "But if again I e're appear/ On this unsocial lifeless spot./ May I be spitted on Guy's spear / Or boiled in his porridge pot." Indeed the Earl "showed them [the comedians] Guy's pot, but he gave them no soup". The glee with which Phoebe records this would indicate the rift between Town Whigs and Castle Tories.

<sup>8</sup> Wahrman, D., 'National society, communal culture: an argument about recent historiography of eighteenth-century Britain', *Social History*, 17 (1992), pp.43-72.

<sup>9</sup> Smail, J., *The Origins of Middle-Class Culture — Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780*, Cornell, 1994, p.228.



Thomson referred precisely to this opposition in *Constance*, her novel about Warwick, when she described the race balls of the late 1780s: “A strong line of demarcation was drawn between the denizens of the towns and the freeholders of the country.”<sup>10</sup> As we have seen (Chapters 1 and 5), this battle was fought in writing in Warwick in the 1780s and 1790s, but the effects of the French Revolution were to put in abeyance this war of words, and the new urban culture provided escapism into other texts for its writers. The late 1790s and the first decades of the nineteenth century were marked by a great publishing activity of town guides, schoolbooks, manuals, and novels. These writings were giving voice and access to the public sphere to women, Dissenters, Rousseauists of various colours, and also to established religious bodies, thus fostering the development of standard forms of language, culture, and cohesiveness to what Patrick Joyce calls ‘an elite created culture’.<sup>11</sup>

As Lynn Hunt observes, the new political class was essentially urban, both in France and England: merchants and manufacturers participated more and more in local administration and rose to positions of authority.<sup>12</sup> They were consumers and supporters of the culture of print. The ‘urban factor’ applies differently in different towns and countries of course, but the overall effect is not dissimilar. For instance, social cleavages were much more marked in residential locations like Troyes than in Draguignan, or even Warwick where a loose social zoning did apply (Chapter 1). But there was a tendency everywhere for the middling sort to move to the more salubrious parts of towns, taking with them the written word as a common utility. The anecdote in Phoebe Parkes’ scrapbook of Fox raising a toast to “the alliance between freedom and learning” illustrates this sense of difference, of distinctiveness.

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<sup>10</sup> Thomson, K., *Constance*, 1, London, 1833, pp.145-47.

<sup>11</sup> Joyce, P., ‘Narrative of Class’, in Joyce, P., ed., *Class*, Oxford, 1995, pp.322-332.

<sup>12</sup> Hunt, L., *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1984, pp.232-235, and *Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France. Troyes and Rheims. 1786-1790*, Stanford, 1978, p.31.

which emanated from those who came to see themselves as “the best informed, most intelligent, and most moral persons in the community”.<sup>13</sup> Some of them expressed their anxieties in the late 1790s about the burden that the Triple Assessment Bill will put on them: “What will become of the Education of the Middling class, which has hitherto furnished all the learning and excellence of the land?”<sup>14</sup> And this leads us to the educational practices fostered by those who wanted to acquire this excellence.

We have seen (Chapter 2) how, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the provision of education was transformed, both in England and in France, by the creation of charity schools, of *petites écoles*, which in England, in the late 1780s, were mostly replaced by the Sunday Schools. In both countries at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, day schools, which followed the spirit of the Sunday Schools, were established for the education *en masse* of the poor. In parallel to these developments, the provision of education in private establishments went through a boom, attracting a clientele mainly from the middling ranks who provided themselves the education they wanted for their children. On top of this private sector, France under Napoleon installed a State system of secondary education to educate the personnel of the new political meritocracy. Those like the Caussemille children, who wanted the education as well as the freedom of choice essential to the world of trade, chose the private schools. Taine, who was a fervent partisan of schools under the Church’s direction, states that the *lycées* were very unpopular, and that “the elite of youth went into private schools”.<sup>15</sup> Long before him, Monsieur Achard, a physician and member of many learned societies in Marseille, criticised the old Latin education dispensed in the colleges of the 1780s: “Without wishing to satyrise [*sic*,

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Black, J., from the writings of the Tory MP William Mackinnon in 1828, in ‘Continuity and change in the British press 1750-1830’, *Publishing History*, 36 (1994), pp.38-85.

<sup>14</sup> *Cambridge Intelligencer*, 13 January 1798, quoted by Wahrman, D., in ‘Virtual Representation: Parliament reporting and languages of class in the 1790s’, *Past and Present*, 136 (1992), 83-113.

<sup>15</sup> Taine, H., *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, 10 vols., Paris, 1907, vol.3, pp.202-204.

in French] those who teach in them [the colleges], amongst upward of 20 or 30 persons who teach the dead languages in some towns, there are none who give lessons in the practical Sciences whose advancement would contribute to the happiness of Society and to the glory of the State.”<sup>16</sup> Whatever the aims of the beneficiaries of secondary education, the result was the acquisition of an educational and moral capital which often, as in the case of the Caussemille children, was seen as more important than the acquisition of economic and social status. For this, parents were prepared to part with their children, boys and girls, and put them through the often gruelling experience of boarding school; or those, like Bertie Greatheed, who had the leisure, or the money, or the dedication, or those, like many Dissenters, who had no other choice, would educate their children at home; or, like the Bissets and the Caussemilles, would give them a mixed home and school education. From their boarding schools, children would practice the art of letter-writing.

Elizabeth Cook has beautifully described the pervasive epistolarity of literary works in the eighteenth century and its contribution to the creation of the public sphere.<sup>17</sup> This epistolary and conversational style was ubiquitous in our period, not just in literary works but also in manuals, novels, guides, articles in the press, pamphlets, etc. Even William Cobbett’s grammar book for labourers was written in the form of letters. The main item of expense on the bills sent from the boarding schools were for pens and stationary. The diary of a schoolgirl in Leicester in 1797, written in *The Ladies Complete Pocket Book*, is a terse and pathetic testimony of great homesickness, and modest budgets which, once pens and paper were paid for, left very little to spend on sweets or other consolations.<sup>18</sup> Another schoolgirl wrote

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<sup>16</sup> Achard, M., *Description historique, géographique et topologique des villes de Provence*, Aix, 1787, p.142.

<sup>17</sup> Cook, E., Heckendorn, *Epistolary Bodies*, Stanford, 1996, *passim* and pp.11-17.

<sup>18</sup> WCRO, CR1704, School Girl Diary. She says, for example, “I hope I shall go home tomorrow. If not I shall be very unhappy,” or “I hope I shall go home before we break up”.

home, from the Misses Byerleys' School in Warwick, in a very careful and 'by the book' handwriting, to tell her mother that she was enjoying French and that she was doing well in English and Grammar class;<sup>19</sup> indeed, good grammar was the distinctive mark of good education. Over our period, as David Vincent forcefully puts it: "A mode of communication [reading and writing] which could have provided the basis for a single egalitarian culture instead became the means of reinforcing the distinction between those who worked with their 'brains' and those who worked with their 'hands'."<sup>20</sup> Women were somewhere in-between these two extremes. The opportunities of getting some kind of education were fairly widespread, either in dame schools or in religious establishments; and although schooling by the Ursulines and other teaching orders in France mostly stopped during the Revolution, it made a come back in the late 1790s and especially in the early nineteenth century. It was a period in both countries, as we have seen (chapter 2), when private schools for girls sometimes outnumbered those for boys. The girls were taught English or French as opposed to Latin, with consequences on their writing activity that we described earlier (Chapter 3).

The mastery of writing gave status and power, and enabled people like John Parkes, the Warwick Dissenter and manufacturer, to participate in and influence local and national politics; they were present in county and borough meetings, and they were members of associations and wrote up and signed petitions and addresses, just as we have seen Bisset and Caussemille doing. John Parkes is a prominent name on the poster advertising the resolutions made at a Warwick Borough meeting which composed a *Dutiful and Loyal Address* to Queen Caroline. By this, he and the signatories put themselves, as they claimed, amongst "the more enlightened and the more independent part of our fellow subjects".<sup>21</sup> It is, for instance, the

<sup>19</sup> WCRO, DR289/2, Letter from a schoolgirl.

<sup>20</sup> Vincent, D., *Literacy and Popular Culture England 1750-1914*, Cambridge, 1989, p.279.

<sup>21</sup> WCRO, CR1886/Box 16, Handbills. Someone from the Castle in which archives the poster belongs, maybe Lord Brooke himself, had added by hand anti-Caroline comments, and corrected

'enlightened' Mr Crompton, Parkes' business partner, who organised a campaign to combat prejudices against the vaccination for small-pox, and not the recorder of this activity, Bertie Greatheed, who was landed gentry of great social prestige with the "Connection who all of you who know me to have among the Rich and the Powerful".<sup>22</sup> These aspirations to distinction through writing, especially letter-writing, which was also for many a necessity of their trade, were recognised by the lower orders, as is testified by their avidity for letter-writing manuals. These were published in their thousands in chapbooks, or in the popular *Bibliothèque Bleue* and, as Roger Chartier suggests, "As picturesque testimonies of a social exoticism, they were read as stories".<sup>23</sup> This would especially apply in France, where the *Secrétaires* stuck to a seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century courtly style well into the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> In England, according to Janet Altman, the letter manual set out much more to create and control a social identity and order attractive to the middling sort. For someone like William Hammond, tailor in Warwick, writing was essential, and his well-kept ledgers testify to this; his detailed accounts for each one of his customers served, at the same time, as a sort of identikit of them, what they wore, and their promptitude (usually poor) at settling their debts. There is more: he kept at the back of his ledgers a kind of register, a *livre de raison*, of important dates in the life of his customers and his own: births, deaths, marriages (especially when clients wedded their own 'sarvent'), and the occasional reference to freak weather conditions or incidents.<sup>25</sup> Unlike that of the Caussemilles, his writing is

'enlightened' by adding 'un-'.

<sup>22</sup> WCRO, CR1707, Bertie Greatheed, Journals, 5 December 1805; WCRO, C1886/box 613, handbill written by Greatheed who had abandoned his 'Connection' and "views of worldly Honour" to stand as candidate for the Independents.

<sup>23</sup> Chartier, R., ed., *La correspondance. Les usages de la lettre au dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris, 1991, p.195.

<sup>24</sup> Altman, J., Gurkin, 'Political ideology in the letter manual (France, England, New England)', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 18 (1989), pp.105-122.

<sup>25</sup> WCRO, CR556/688, Ledger of William Hammond, tailor, 1788-1800.

strictly utilitarian, not used for self-expression and assertion, nor for communication; not the writing of distinction but of usefulness.

Paradoxically, the time when the rights of the Author became recognised is also the time when the Readers become paramount in the culture of the written word (Chapter 3). Robert Darnton has demonstrated the influence of Rousseau on changing the attitudes of his readers, when he addressed himself directly to them and created a sort of two way communication between writer and reader. You read to cope with life and to gain a sort of personal freedom.<sup>26</sup> In that respect, Rousseau was a forerunner of Roland Barthes who sees reading as liberating, “an activity we may call countertheological, properly revolutionary”, and he adds that “a text consists of multiple writings, proceeding from several cultures and entering into dialogue, into parody, into contestation; but there is a site where this multiplicity is collected, and this site is not the author, as has hitherto been claimed, but the reader”.<sup>27</sup> It was therefore the uses that the readers could make of the written word which became paramount. The readers want to be ‘the best informed’ amongst their fellow citizens, and this was impressed upon the latter by the beneficiaries of such power. For instance, the *Cahiers de Doléances*, the voice of the people of France, were largely written with the pen of the literate *Tiers-Etats*, at least in their final stage, at the level of the district or *Sénéchaussée*. One of the demands is for their representants to be ‘*allivrés*’, well-read, rather than well-born. The municipal council of Draguignan defined the inhabitants worthy of participating in its deliberations as those “heads of families well-read and interested in the public good”.<sup>28</sup> This sounds very much like William Mackinnon’s description of the

<sup>26</sup> Darnton, R., ‘Readers respond to Rousseau’, *The Great Cat Massacre*, London, 1985, pp. 209-249, and *Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, New York, 1995, p.117.

<sup>27</sup> Barthes, R., ‘The Death of the Author’ in *The Rustle of Language*, 1967. (transl.) Oxford, 1986, p.54.

<sup>28</sup> Derlange, M., ‘En Provence au dix-huitième siècle: la représentation des habitants aux conseils

middling sort three decades later as “the most intelligent and the most moral (Chapter 5).

These times, when the idea of greater literacy for all was becoming generally accepted, albeit reluctantly by some, including Rousseau, coincided with the increasing availability of reading matter. It was when the steam-driven press was introduced, in England in 1814, and a decade later in France; when paper was beginning to be mass-produced out of wood pulp; and when lithographic reproduction was invented, which permitted good quality illustrations. The manner of, and the places for, reading also changed, as we have seen (Chapter 3). If there were more public opportunities for reading, those who could afford books also had private reading spaces. Although Chartier qualifies the validity of the distinction between private silent reading for the elites and plebeian reading aloud in public places, it is still a useful distinction, even if the cultural dominance of the book was challenged during the Revolutionary period, with its unprecedented production of ephemeral literature which made reading a more democratic activity. Yet this revolution in reading mostly affected the already literate and, more importantly, those who were already reading, as Raymond Williams has pointed out.<sup>29</sup> These readers created a literature for themselves, reflecting their interests and aspirations. Of course it does not mean that only the elite read, as has been demonstrated by Jane Fergus in her article on servants’ reading: bookshop records showed “a striking similarity between servants’ choices and those of their masters”, though these servants might themselves also have been of the ‘middling sort’, as Fergus also points out.<sup>30</sup> The

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généraux des communautés’. *Annales du Midi*, 86 (1974), pp.46-67.

<sup>29</sup> Williams, R., *The Long Revolution*, London, 1961, pp.167 and 175-187.

<sup>30</sup> Fergus, J., ‘Provincial servants’ reading in the late eighteenth century’, Raven, J., Small, H., Tadmor, N., eds., *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.202-225; see also Altick, R., *The English Common Reader A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, Chicago, 1957, pp.33-36 and p.83, or Gregory, P., ‘The Popular Fiction of the Eighteenth-Century Commercial Circulating Libraries’, PhD thesis, University of

Press is the favourite organ of the new readers, and the *Affiches* and the newspapers were creating this new market of the word, creating a readership through their columns and their advertisements for books. There were attempts at creating and catering for a different, less 'middle class' readership, but these were repressed by stamp duties, as in the New Stamp Duties Act of 1819, and by the tightening of control in both countries, which led to the return in post-revolutionary France of the supremacy of the book.<sup>31</sup>

As well as the press creating a readership culture through its style and its advertisements for books, there also was Religion, not only by being the source of a vast market for books as we have seen, but also by promoting reading as a way to a better life, this being true primarily of Protestant England, of course, and, to a lesser extent, of Counter-Reformation France (Chapter 3). Yet, as Gail Bossenga puts it: "Religion filled the public spaces of the Old Regime", but "removing the transcendental authority of God from the public sphere" implied the creation of a new vocabulary "of natural sociability".<sup>32</sup> The competition between State and Religion in France was paralleled by the competition created by a pluralist Religion and the necessities of trade in England. A new language of citizenship had to be devised since, in France, the rights of citizenship were no longer derived from status by birth and, in Britain, the cause of independence had to define itself by inventing a new politico-social vocabulary.<sup>33</sup> The secularisation operated by the written word in all its pervasive forms including, in France, the recording of vital statistics, was one of

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Edinburgh, 1984, p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> This is well described by Carla Hesse in *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1991, pp 224-231 and esp. 245.

<sup>32</sup> Bossenga, G., 'Rights and Citizens in the Old Regime', (Review article), *French Historical Studies*, 20 (1997), pp.231-243 and esp. p.241.

<sup>33</sup> See Wahrman, D., *Imagining the Middle Class The Political Representation of Class in Britain, 1780-1840*, Cambridge, 1995, *passim*.



the radical changes which added to the changes of attitudes to reading.

In both countries, it was women who were creators and propagators of the new vocabulary of sociability and of the culture of reading, as readers themselves and as writers and educators. This contributed, to an extent that has not generally been recognised, to the formation of the notion of a distinctive culture of the middle class, as expressed in a moral and educational language which it recognised as its own. Women also contributed through this literary activity to the 'true public sphere', even though they were 'passive citizens'. In fact, they nearly fulfilled the requirements which entitled one to participate in local administration: although they were not official 'heads of family', they could be land owners, and they certainly fulfilled the alternative requirement to participate in the public sphere, in that they were educated and interested in the public good, and were in fact active participants through debating societies, book societies, and philanthropic organisations as Vickery has shown so convincingly.<sup>34</sup> Women were the recognised nurturing pivot of the family, its source of virtue and morals, and the family held a central place, both public and private, within both English and French society; Mona Ozouf has shown that, during the Revolution, the family and the mother within it were in fact officially nominated as contributors to the new culture of republican virtue for the nation.<sup>35</sup> Abbé Grégoire made this very clear in his Report to the National Convention on setting up a competition for basic books for elementary education: it starts with a plea for breastfeeding and hygiene, and then demonstrates that the fundamental goodness of the child needs to be respected and developed early, a notion he says he has borrowed from the Quakers. Therefore the first elementary book must "embrace the period which stretches from pregnancy to the age of six".<sup>36</sup> Thus, according to his

<sup>34</sup> Vickery, A., *The Gentleman's Daughter*, London, 1998, esp. pp.253-279.

<sup>35</sup> Ozouf, M., *Les mots de femmes*, Paris, 1995, pp.347-351.

<sup>36</sup> Abbé Grégoire, *Convention Nationale: Instruction Publique. Rapport sur l'ouverture d'un concours pour les livres élémentaires de la première éducation, Séance du 3 pluviôse, an II*, (Bibliothèque Nationale).

scheme, the mother and child are involved in the educational process from the time of conception. Women in both countries were also considered as the guardians of Christian values. This was even more true in France where women, in opposition to men, became increasingly associated with the church, and contributed to the parallel development of the Marial cult, thus enshrining the model of women as mother: a development which was ultimately consecrated by the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 (Chapter 1 & 3). This increased role of women in the Church gave them the necessary authority on matters of morals and education, hence their increased importance in the market of educational books. From the Restoration there grew a great emulation amongst pious women and men to write highly moral books for the youth which came to be called 'prize books'; these works were often not signed or bore only initials, and some publishers grew rich on them; though their authors were rather poorly paid.<sup>37</sup>

Women had a considerable place in the culture of 'General Grammar', as it was named, and which Pierre Bourdieu calls 'legitimate culture'.<sup>38</sup> Yet they contributed equally to a less elitist culture of international readership by being the agents of the recognition of the universality of childhood as a specific social category, for which they created the simple 'civic' language which was to be taught in the mutual schools, then later the primary schools, in both countries; in the best cases they gave the people the language to fight their rights later in the nineteenth century. In the meantime, and although the Revolutionary idea of the value of education for all was no longer seriously contradicted in either country, its application had the effect of creating inequality between those who had access only to elementary schooling, and those who had secondary education in private schools, academies, colleges, and

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<sup>37</sup> Glenisson, J., 'Le livre pour la jeunesse', Martin, H., Chartier, R., *Histoire de l'édition française*, 4 vols, vol.2, 1995, pp.416-445.

<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu, P., *La distinction, critique sociale du jugement*, Paris, 1979, pp.101-102 for instance.

*lycées*. The ‘hyperactive production’ of grammars was the sign first and foremost of the need for control, for a code which would be recognised as legitimate. These new linguistic codes were doubly alienating because they not only created a division between practitioners and non-practitioners, but also they deprived the speakers of the *patois* and dialects of their plurilingualism, in favour of those who had established that the only ‘acceptable’ plurilingualism was Latin English or Latin French as taught in private schools or the *Lycées*. A more egalitarian printer in Marseille, aware of this problem, published a French grammar explained by means of the Provençal language, written for those who could read French if not speak it well or write it. He compared the two languages on equal terms, and concluded: “One finds it difficult to conceive the disdain paraded by the upper class towards our maternal language [Provençal].”<sup>39</sup> Michel de Certeau suggests that the Abbé Grégoire himself, with his *Survey of the French Patois*, created the idea of distance which he sees as the source of “social and imaginary distinctions”.<sup>40</sup> For instance, Question 6 of Grégoire’s survey says: “How far is it [the dialect] from the national idiom?”, and Question 28: “Has it been noticeable that it [the dialect] is getting closer to the national idiom?” This created the idea that dialects were somehow what they should not be, and although it was not in Grégoire’s intention to disparage them, this is how they were interpreted by the *allivrés* who, according to de Certeau, used the survey questions as a tool to distinguish themselves and specify their own linguistic identity.

The characters we met in Warwick and Draguignan were amongst those who invested in the ‘legitimate culture’ but who, however, had the choice between cultures (Chapters 4 & 5). As James Bisset said in his advert for the Reading Rooms and Libraries in the town, they provided for their clientele both French and ‘Oxford’

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<sup>39</sup> *Grammaire française expliquée au moyen de la langue provençale ou nouvelle méthode avec laquelle un provençal qui sait lire, peut, sans maître, apprendre en peu de temps à parler et à écrire correctement le français*, Marseille, 1826.

<sup>40</sup> Certeau, M. de, Julia, D., Revel J., *Une politique de la langue la Révolution française et les patois*, Paris, 1975, pp.50-60, esp. p.53.

books, novels and the classics. Bertie Greatheed and his circle in Warwick read the Greek and Latin poets, and also the novels of the day and the Whiggish Press such as the *Morning Chronicle* or the *Edinburgh Review*. Jean-Pierre Caussemille had an interest in the classic poets which was said to interfere with his trade at times, but he also read the national papers and the books related to his soap and vinegar industry. There was in them all what Bourdieu has called *bonne volonté culturelle*, cultural goodwill.<sup>41</sup> However it can be argued that what now distinguishes the Caussemilles or the Bissets in our eyes is the fact that their ‘cultural goodwill’ was not solely directed towards the ‘legitimate culture’; they also had absorbed, and not rejected, the culture of the market-place, of the pub, of the fairs, and of the elementary school or the dame school and their elementary grammar.

This is where the microhistoric approach is useful as it illustrates, with the examples of two towns and two families, that no definite line between cultures could be drawn at the local and familial level, where distinctions are much more blurred. It allows us to qualify the assertions about the divide of cultures in the early nineteenth century, which alarmed so much the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>42</sup> The new audiences, or ‘collection of minds’ created by the written word,<sup>43</sup> were less defining in small places like Warwick and Draguignan because, it can be speculated, there was less of a need for a ‘knowable community’ because of the local networks of sociability where a cross-section of society was involved.

Bearing in mind these reservations, the Caussemilles can also be described as belonging to the right of centre of the cultural continuum. Jean-Pierre Caussemille set great store by the ‘General Grammar’ style, and it is this acquired linguistic capital

<sup>41</sup> Bourdieu, *La distinction...*, ‘La bonne volonté culturelle’, pp.365-431.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance Klancher, J., *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832*, London, 1987, esp. pp.43-49.

<sup>43</sup> Klancher, *The Making...*, p.60.

which allowed the male members of the family to go through “the exhausting cursus of urban notoriety”, that of the chambers of commerce, associations, local government, petitions, etc.<sup>44</sup> In their case, as in that of other educated citizens of Provence, the linguistic capital was giving them twice the amount of Bourdieu’s *profit de distinction*, as they had Grammar and they had French. As Garat, ex-minister of the Interior, said in a speech at the French Academy in 1798 for the launching of the fifth edition of its dictionary: “The true language of an enlightened people exists only in the mouth and in the writing of a small number of people.”<sup>45</sup>

The Enlightenment’s cardinal value of freedom, given momentum by the ideals of universality of the French Revolution, favoured the establishment of the notion of unfettered exchange in the trading of goods and ideas. The rising trading and manufacturing classes needed such a space in which commerce, in its wide sense of social, cultural, and economic exchange, could thrive, along with the necessary benevolence, politeness, and education it entailed. This is why the Caussemilles and the Bissets protested against restraints in communication, through blockade and the politics of war, and poor roads and postal services. It was said that the profit brought by turnpike roads was a reflection of the success of circulating libraries,<sup>46</sup> and this is why Bisset was inspired to write congratulatory verses to Lord Nelson when he visited Birmingham in August 1802: “By thee there’s restored PEACE, COMMERCE, and Joy to this Isle!” In his “Song on the Preliminaries of Peace”, signed in October 1801, he also enthused:

Our Artists, Mechanics and Neighbours,

With joy soon returning their labours...

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<sup>44</sup> Roche, D., *Les Républicains des lettres*, Paris, 1988, p.293.

<sup>45</sup> Higonnet, P., ‘The politics of linguistic terrorism and grammatical hegemony during the French Revolution, *Social History*, 5 (1980), pp.41-69.

<sup>46</sup> Laugero, G., ‘Infrastructures of Enlightenment. road-making, the public sphere and the emergence of literature’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), pp.45-67.

Arts, Science, and Commerce reviving  
 With zeal for Old England still striving,  
 Good Orders our Merchants will quickly display.<sup>47</sup>

The Enlightenment and the French Revolution also relied on the freedom of the written word to change society and it was then that, in the words of de Certeau, "The good usage of the Word is replacing its truth".<sup>48</sup> It was those who decided what 'good' usage was who therefore gave themselves moral and social advantage, and some degree of political clout for the future. It could be said that the French Revolution, on the one hand, and English radicalism, on the other, enhanced if not created an inequality through the teaching and use of language, even if they also forged the language of radicalism of the second half of the nineteenth century. The paradox is further emphasised by the fact that this new division between the humanist cultural capital of Latin and General Grammar, as opposed to the 'monolingual' cultural capital, was repeated across borders, thus forming a bond, a certain sociability, amongst the possessors of 'colingual' culture, at a time when the two countries were almost uninterruptedly at war with each other. It is striking also that it was written texts which cemented the 'invention' of a middle class in both Britain and France, the Reform Bill in one, and the *Cahiers de Doléances* and the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* in the other. In Britain, a middle class was loosely brought together by the political cause of independence, and in France by the fact that the rights of citizenship were no longer derived from status by birth, but by the egalitarian rights they had defined in their language. Thus distinction through the acquisition of this '*culture sans frontières*' of the written word was achieved in two ways. One was that the ritual of letter-writing gave stability and cohesion to the familial group, and entry into public recognition and broadness of horizons; and the other was an attitude to reading and a general 'cultural willingness' which over-ruled local limitations and individual lack of leisure.

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<sup>47</sup> Birmingham Archives, 184534, I IR20, Bisset, J., Commonplace Book, 1800-1805.

<sup>48</sup> Certeau, M. de, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, Paris, 1975, p.206.

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